

# The Hilton Village Commercial Area Master Plan



Hilton Village, City of Newport News, Virginia

Department of Planning and Development  
Department of Engineering

City of Newport News, Virginia

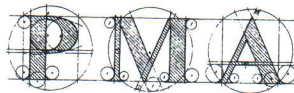


# The Hilton Village Commercial Area Master Plan

*prepared for:*

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Figure A  
Proposed Streetscape &  
Facade Improvements ;  
Computer rendering by  
PMA

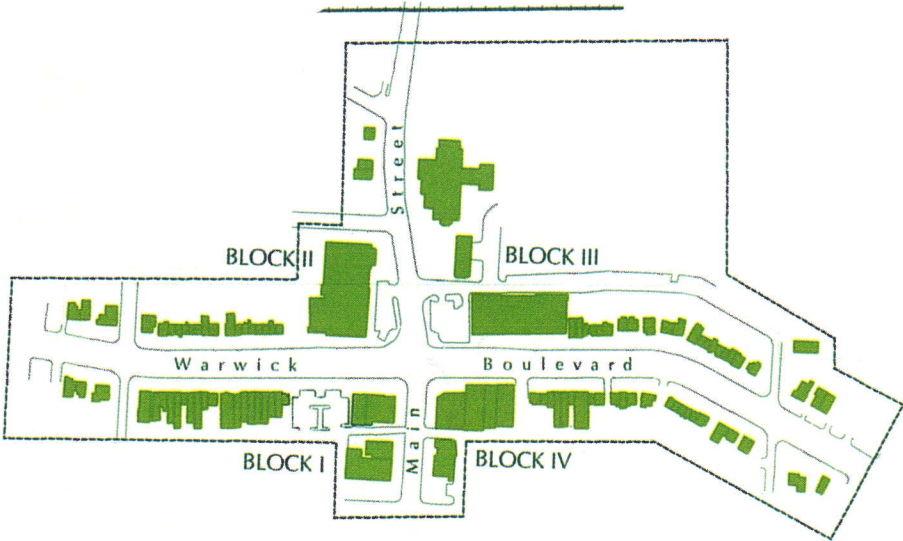


Figure B  
Study area; Hilton Village  
Historic District

----- Study Area





# OVERVIEW

The **Hilton Village Commercial Area Master Plan** has been developed to address ways to visually improve the commercial area of Historic Hilton Village and make it a more viable location for specialty retail and commercial businesses. This plan treats the commercial area as a unique setting within the overall Historic District, taking into account its mixed uses and residential style of architecture. The plan recommends strategies and solutions for mitigating and correcting the negative impact of many roadway expansions, the loss of the original landscape and trees, the intrusion of uncoordinated commercial alterations, the loss of buildings, and the physical deterioration which has occurred over many years. Recommendations for streetscape and public space improvements will reestablish a unified appearance to the public areas along the streets and sidewalks restoring a pedestrian scale to the commercial area. Recommendations for building facade improvements will provide guidance for property owners to restore and maintain their buildings, as well as make alterations which are in harmony with the character of the original buildings. Recommendations for signage will establish a unified approach to signage in the district which will improve the readability and clarity of all forms of signage.

The Introduction, Section 1, provides an overview of the characteristics which make the commercial area of Hilton Village unique and appealing for retail businesses. Current problems with its appearance and function which are limiting its potential as a successful retail area are discussed. Signage problems are also examined.

Recommendations for enhancing public and private areas are addressed in Section 2, titled Master Plan for Streetscape Improvements. These recommendations deal with needed improvements to the public right-of-way as well as private property which contributes to the image of the commercial area.

Section 3, titled Building Facade Improvement Concepts, identifies concepts and strategies for facade improvements which will restore the original harmony and character of the historic buildings while accommodating retail and commercial display needs.

Section 4, titled Signage in the Commercial Area, addresses ways to unify and improve commercial signage, public signage, and gateway signage into a cohesive and appropriate system.

Section 5, titled Implementation Strategies, addresses ways to implement the plan. Section 6, titled Recommended Design Standards for the Commercial Area, provides suggested standards and guidelines for streetscape improvements, building design and signage for private property improvements to guide property owners toward a more unified and harmonious appearance in the commercial area.



Figure 1.1  
Original Plan of Hilton  
Village

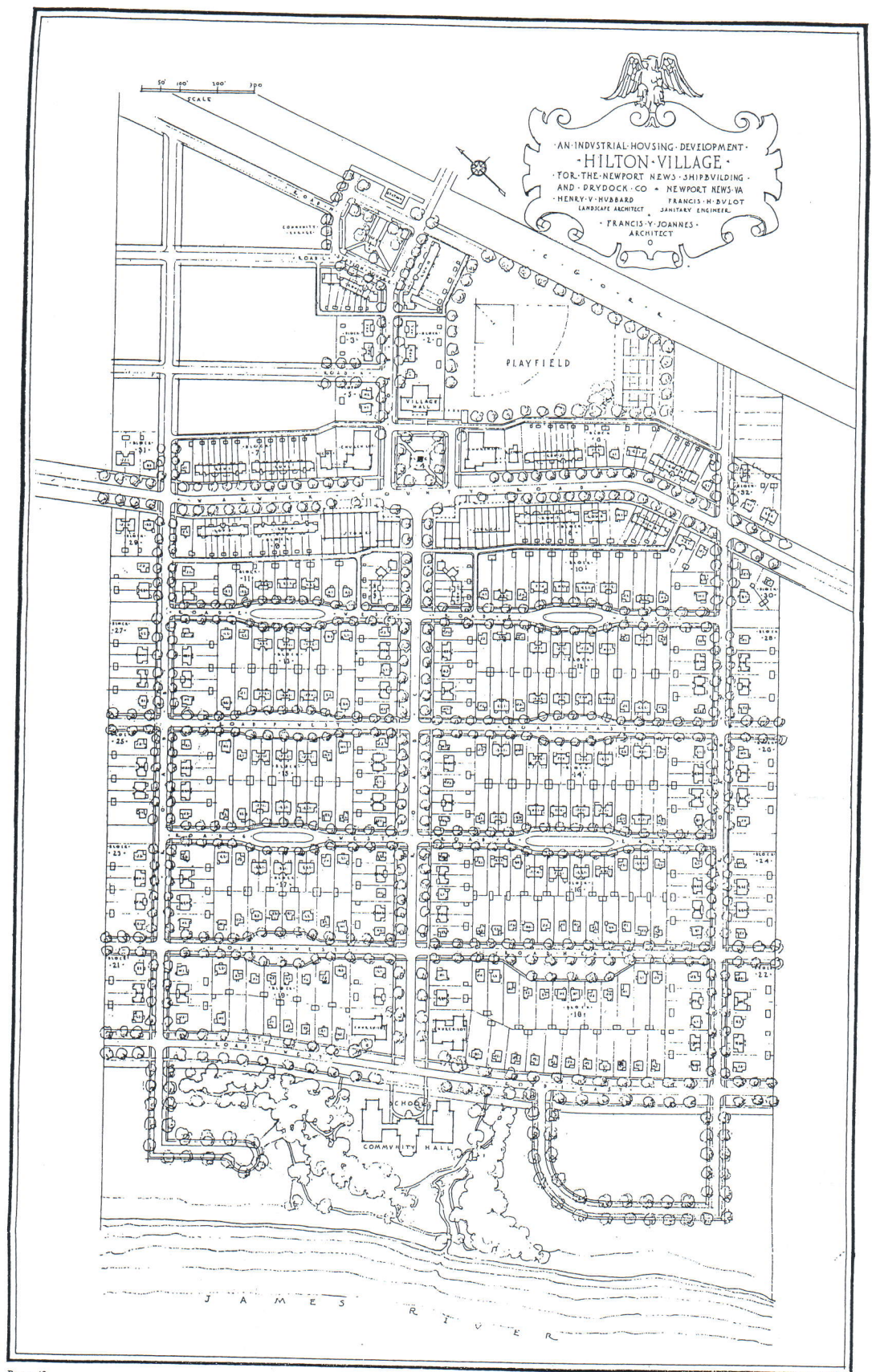


PLATE 42



# INTRODUCTION

1.0

## 1.1 The Original Hilton Plan

Hilton Village, the first government-sponsored housing project of its kind in the United States, was designed in 1917 as a community for the employees of Newport News Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Company to meet the housing demands imposed by World War I ship production. The land plan of the community, shown in Figure 1.1, represented the emerging values of the "Garden City Movement" through the masterful design of streets, landscaping, and building locations to establish a human-scaled and richly-varied community which contained everything necessary for a well-balanced suburb. The architecture of Hilton Village features several styles of houses which are derived from English and European precedents. Houses along Warwick Boulevard were designed to work differently than the other areas of Hilton. Typically they were long row-buildings, consisting of eight-to-ten townhouses. These row-buildings were located along the edges of Warwick Boulevard forming an urban "street wall". This arrangement provided denser buildings which visually blocked the more public street zone from the interior of the community. Commercial buildings were planned on one side of the intersection of Warwick Boulevard and Main Street. Churches were planned for the other side of the intersection. A town square was located between the churches on axis with Main Street. According to the plan, a statue or monument seems to have been intended for the center of the square. A town hall building was to be built on the northeast side of the square on axis with Main Street. A train station was planned behind the town hall building. World War I ended before the construction was completed on the Village and consequently the

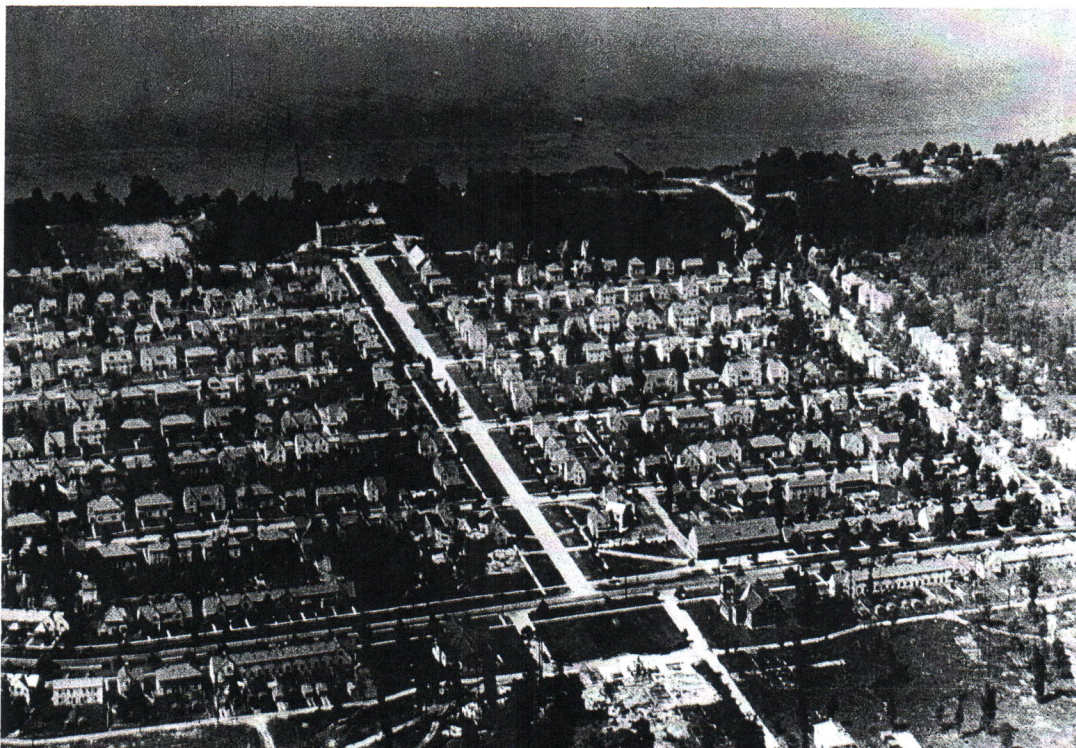


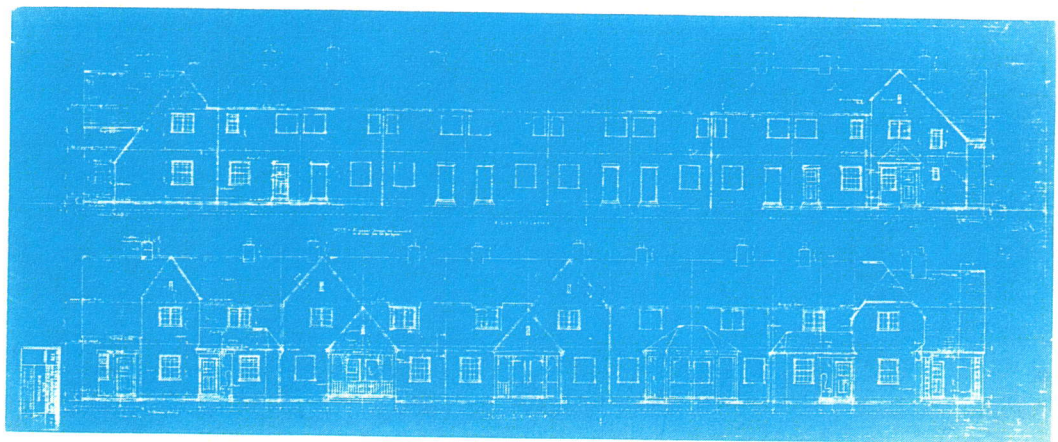
Figure 1.2  
Aerial View of Hilton; c.a.  
1926; Photograph taken by  
the Army Air Corps



Train Station, Town Hall, the Square and most of the commercial buildings were never built. Figure 1.2 shows how the Village looked in 1926 before the commercial area began to develop and change. The incompleteness of the square area is apparent by the lack of buildings to frame the edges of the streets.

## **1.2 The Unity of the Architecture**

The original houses, duplexes, row-buildings, and stores were carefully designed to develop a strong unity and rich variety in the "Cottage Style" of architecture. This style was derived from a movement started in England in the early 1900s which emphasized a humanly scaled architecture of natural materials. The design of the row-buildings is directly related to the English Tudor-influenced houses and duplexes in other parts of the Village. Steeply pitched gabled roofs mark the ends of each row-building providing an upright emphasis as can be seen in Figure 1.3. The facades of the row-buildings are a uniform plane of stucco which creates a feeling of solidity. A variety of porches is used along the front of each row-building to break up the continuous facades and bring the two-story scale of the buildings down to the human scale. Each porch is shared between two townhouse units which allows the row-building to appear more unified and expansive than if each townhouse unit had a separate entry. Important character-defining details like the Tudor-styled brackets, the scroll-cut, arts-and-crafts railings, and craftsman-inspired brick stoops appear in the porches which complete the English-village imagery. In this sense the porches are critical to achieving the variety and harmony of the architectural character. Other subtle devices like the unity of roofing materials, unity of windows, and the variation of chimney heights create a feeling of cohesiveness and variety.



**Figure 1.3**  
Original Working Drawings  
of Row-Buildings



### 1.3 The Impact of Changes to Public Spaces

At the present time the public spaces in the commercial area of Hilton Village are in need of a great deal of maintenance and improvement. In particular, the sidewalks in Block I (where most of the retail establishments are located) are cracked and broken, and the large expanse of pavement overwhelms the trees and planting areas (see Figures 1.4 and 1.5). On the other blocks there is a patchwork of paving varying from very narrow concrete walks with wide lawns which feel residential to unrelieved slabs of concrete, with many variations. These problems, combined with the many alterations to the facades which have taken place over the years, obscure the historic integrity and character of the Village, preventing it from becoming the attraction that it can be.

Likewise, the alleyways and driveways vary widely in paving materials. Trash receptacles, mechanical equipment, outbuildings and garages along the alleyways are chaotic and have a deteriorated and unappealing appearance (Figure 1.7). Because the alleyways provide an opportunity to create additional parking for the commercial area, it will be essential to improve their function, accessibility and visual appearance as part of the public space master plan.

Finally, there is limited open space along Warwick Boulevard to provide places to sit and relax away from the street. The original Hilton Village Square was lost by the realignment of Main Street. The spaces "left over" from this realignment are now largely devoted to parking. The master plan addresses this problem by reestablishing a new Hilton Square in front of the new Main Street Branch Library.



Figure 1.4  
Condition of the  
Streetscape; Looking  
Southeast along Warwick  
Boulevard; PMA



## 1.4 The Impact of Changes to the Buildings

Changes resulting from commercial growth and activity have impacted the buildings along Warwick Boulevard substantially. Commercial activity alone has resulted in many alterations to the original building facades to accommodate storefronts, display areas, and entrances. In many instances these additions and alterations are not compatible with the original residences and coverup the character-defining elements. These changes resulted in a chaotic and unharmonious appearance which detracts from the cohesiveness of the original design and makes the area less competitive as a specialty retail area (see Figures 1.4 and 1.5).

Commercial buildings, which have been built around the intersection of Main Street and Warwick Boulevard, such as the Abbott and Marshall building, the Silverman Fur building, the C&P Telephone building, and the Signet Bank Building, are not compatible with the style and character of the historic area. An exception to this is the Beecroft and Bull store which has a gabled slate roof, stucco facade, and Tudor-revival details which complement the architecture of the Village. As the original townhouses have been converted to commercial uses, rear additions have been built to accommodate the need for more space. Some of these additions cover the entire lot leaving no room for on-site parking, landscaping, or trash pick-up. Most of these are in poor condition and detract from the appearance of the alleyways (see Figure 1.7).

Building conditions within the commercial area are classified into the following categories and these are shown in Figure 1.6:



**Figure 1.5**  
Condition of the Facades  
and Signage; PMA



**MINIMAL ALTERATIONS** - Buildings which are essentially in their original condition and may require some maintenance and corrective action.

**MINOR ALTERATIONS** - Such as minor window alterations, installation of aluminum siding, or other minor changes which are reversible.

**SIGNIFICANT ALTERATIONS** - Alterations which either individually or together weaken the original architectural character and appearance of the building, such as inappropriate infill of a porch, enlargement of the original window openings, or a combination of minor alterations.

**MAJOR ALTERATIONS** - Alterations which dramatically change the architectural character and appearance of the original building and obscure and cover its primary features, such as front additions which are not compatible with the style of the building, large expanses of windows or glass which are not compatibly designed for the Village architecture.

**DEMOLISHED BUILDINGS** - Buildings which have been demolished include portions of row-buildings next to the Baptist Church, First United Methodist Church and the city parking lot next to Beecroft and Bull, the old Seward's building (Hilton's only original commercial building), and two townhouse units in Block IV which were lost and rebuilt.

**CONTRIBUTING BUILDINGS** - Contributing buildings are buildings which are not significant to the original design, but which are compatible with the original design theme of the Historic District through their location, design, scale, theme, and materials. Examples of contributing buildings are the churches, the fire station, and the Beecroft and Bull store. Contributing buildings also include structures which represent other styles and which possess strong architectural integrity even though they occur later in the development of the Village. (e.g. Village Theater and the Signet Bank Building.)

**NON-CONTRIBUTING BUILDINGS** - These buildings do not relate to the historic district due to inconsistencies in scale, style, and materials.

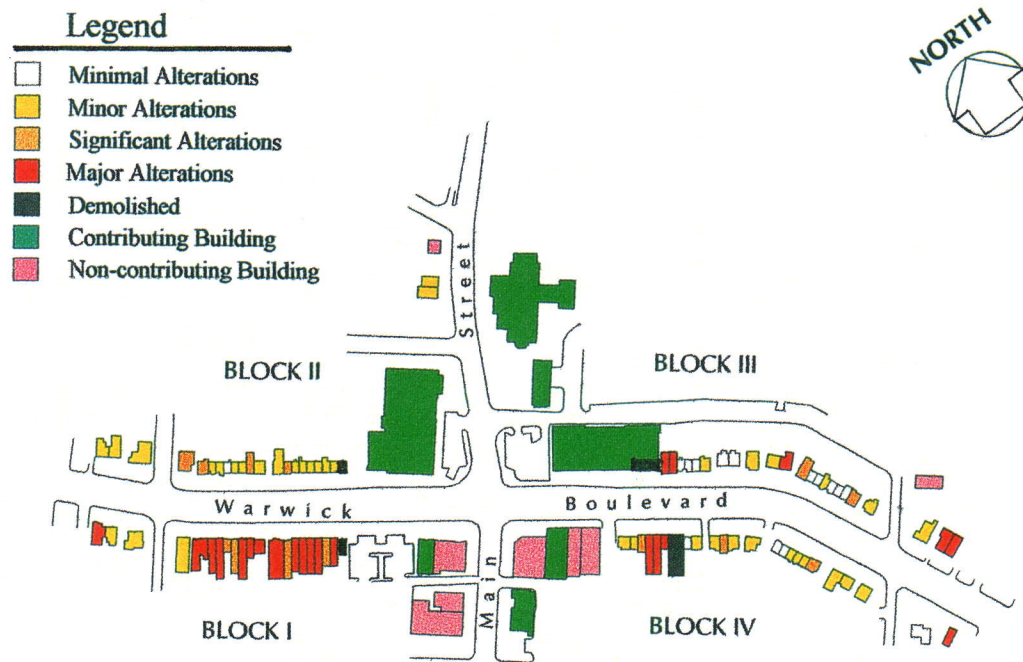


Figure 1.6  
Map of Conditions; PMA



**Figure 1.7**  
Condition of the Alleyways;  
PMA



### **1.5 Signage Problems**

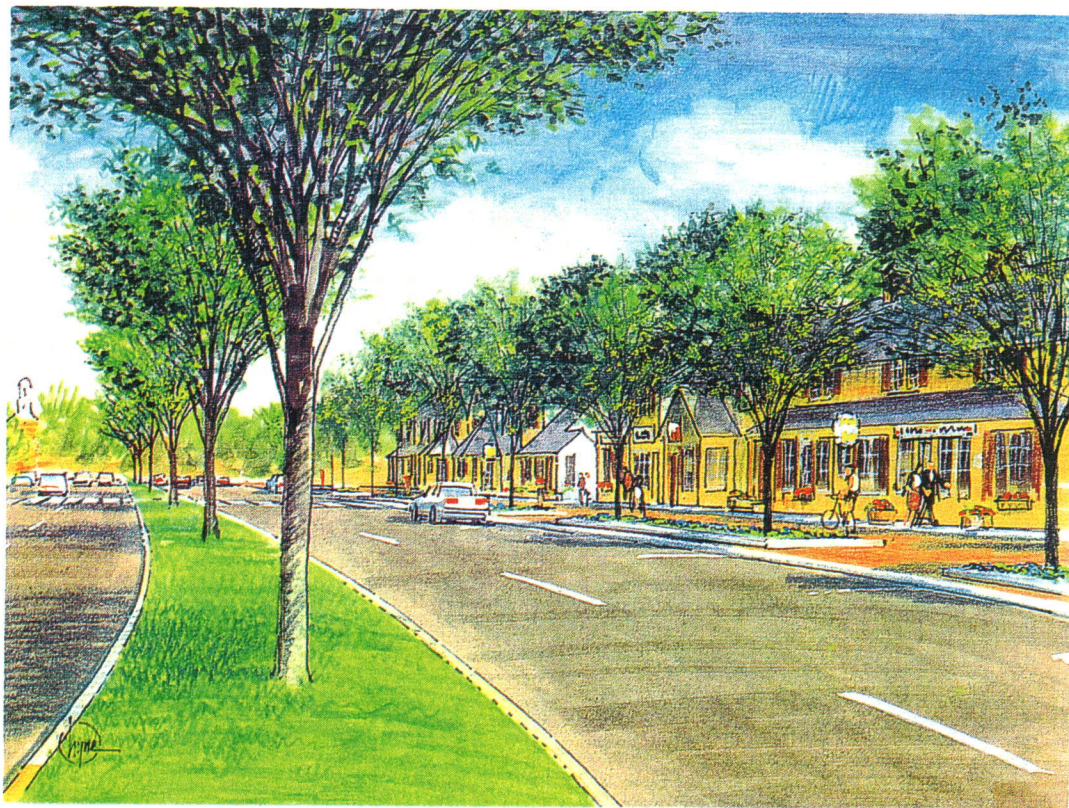
Commercial signage which has developed over many years is uncoordinated, cluttered, and detracts from the streetscape scene. The existing Mast-arm signs vary in height and location, as can be seen in Figure 1.5. Many of these are so low that they block the storefront display areas and often block other signs from the view of pedestrians and traffic. Many of the sign posts are crudely made of utilitarian materials which impart an untidy and unprofessional look to the entire commercial area. Although sign size and design are reviewed by the Hilton Village Architectural Review Board, a consistent approach toward sign location and sign design has not yet emerged. This is due in part to the difficulty of integrating commercial signage with buildings which were originally designed as residences. In particular, the eaves lines of the porches are low and do not allow much flexibility for signage above the building entrances. Few buildings have areas on the front facade which work easily for building-mounted signs. The post-mounted sign (defined as a freestanding sign in the City's Sign Ordinance) has been selected by many businesses due to these problems. However, many of these signs have been placed so far out from the building that is difficult to associate the sign with the particular business when traveling by automobile.







**Figure 2.1**  
Improvements  
Recommended along  
Warwick Boulevard;  
Design by APA, illustration  
by Eric Hyne



**Figure 2.2**  
Existing Conditions along  
Warwick Boulevard in  
Hilton Village; Photo by  
PMA



# MASTER PLAN FOR STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS

## 2.0

### 2.1 Purpose of the Master Plan

Hilton Village is a unique community which possesses the special characteristics needed for a specialty retail and commercial center. However, the retail and commercial "front door" to this community along Warwick Boulevard has slowly deteriorated over the years, and is in need of major renovations to the streetscape, building facades, and alleyways. Grant funding has been secured by the City through the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) for improvements to the streetscape along Warwick Boulevard including the Historic District and areas immediately adjacent to it. The master plan addresses design concepts for streetscape and alleyway enhancements which are needed to reestablish a cohesive pedestrian environment which is appropriate for the Historic District as shown in Figure 2.1. These streetscape enhancements will be implemented through the ISTEA grant to improve the thoroughfare along Warwick Boulevard including sidewalks and other public spaces in the district. It was developed in coordination with recommendations for building facade renovations and signage improvements that are needed to enhance the image of the Village and begin the economic revitalization.

### 2.2 Streetscape Improvements

The objective of the streetscape improvements in the commercial area of Hilton Village is to create a distinctive image for the Village along Warwick Boulevard which will improve its viability as a specialty retail area. One of the primary goals is to restore a human scale to the street and reduce the visual impact of wide roads through the commercial area. Improvements to the sidewalks, landscaping, and other pedestrian elements of the streetscape are also very important to create an environment which encourages pedestrians to come to the area to explore and shop. Another important goal is to encourage improvements on private property (front yards, side yards, and rear yards) which will enhance the appearance and utility of these areas and strengthen the visual cohesiveness of the Village.

**Restoring a Human Scale to the Street** - Enhancements to the streetscape are recommended to restore lush tree-lined streets along Warwick Boulevard creating a more intimate "human-scale" to the commercial area. The concept involves widening the median enough to allow a row of trees and a wider planting bed to divide the highway. The widening of the median along Warwick Boulevard is an important component of the streetscape renovations, because it "breaks up" the wide expanse of pavement along Warwick Boulevard (see Figures 2.1 and 2.2). It is recommended that the curb on the median be higher and straighter than that on the sidewalks, in order to make it harder for cars to jump the curb. New trees are also envisioned in planters on both sides of Warwick Boulevard. These trees will form a



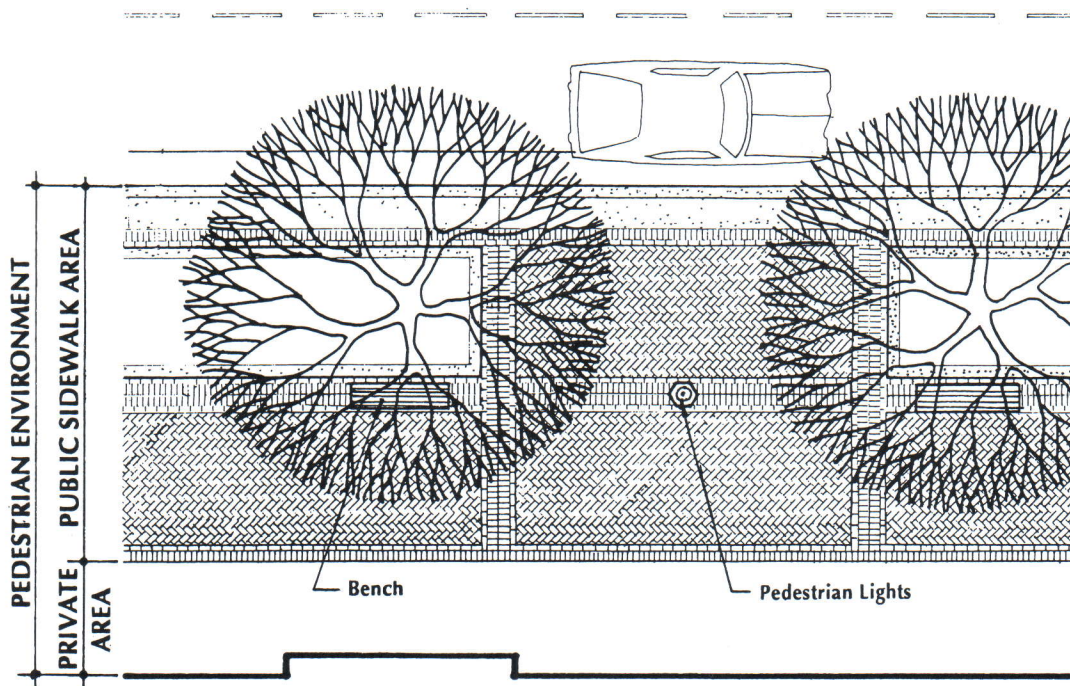
visual "bridge" across the road unifying the streetscape. This effect will be strengthened over time as the tree canopies grow towards one another.

The curbs on the outside of Warwick Boulevard will need to be moved five to six feet closer to the building fronts in order to widen the median and widen the parallel parking spaces. Because the sidewalks are quite generous (generally about 25'-30'), there is sufficient width to move the curb and still allow for planters and a wide public sidewalk area. The trees chosen for the median and sidewalk planters are *Zelkova serrata* "Green Vase." These trees are high-branching and vase-shaped in form and will allow clear views of the storefronts. The planters next to the curb also perform another function: they provide a buffer between the pedestrian and the street. Warwick Boulevard is often crowded with cars and trucks, especially during rush hour, and this planted zone will bring pedestrians closer to the storefront and create a comfortable feeling of enclosure. These recommended improvements are illustrated in the Master Plan drawing shown in Figure 2.10.

**Improvements to the Pedestrian Environment** - The area between the curb and the storefronts is designed as a pedestrian environment, as shown in Figure 2.3. Improvements to the pedestrian environment are designed to enhance the area between the edge of the street and the building facades giving this space a more intimate scale, shielding the sidewalk area from traffic, and establishing a high-quality visual environment. There are two different areas in the streetscape which require special design solutions - **Retail Areas** and **Mixed-Use Areas**.

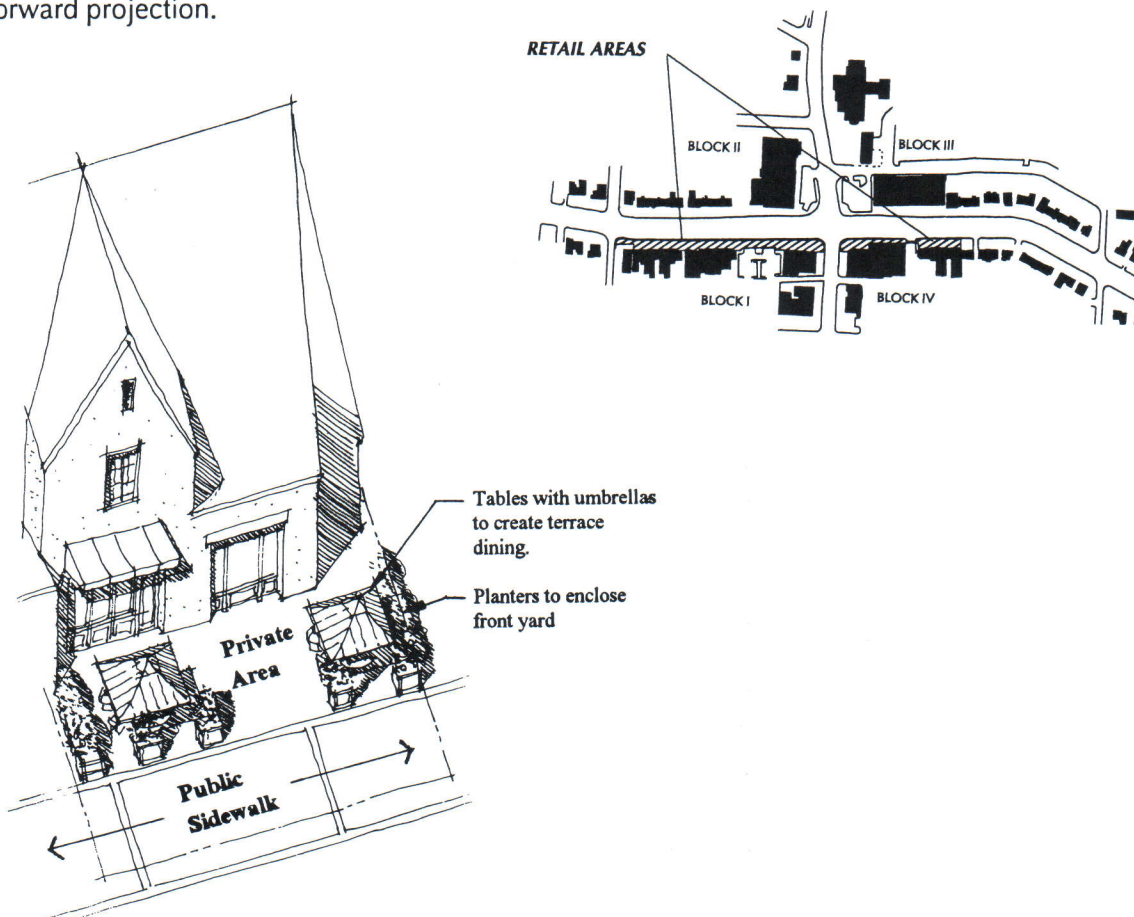
**Retail Areas** - Retail uses are most concentrated in Block I and part of Block IV as shown in Figure 2.4. In these areas the sidewalk paving extends from the curb to the building facade. New pavers are proposed in these areas to replace the concrete between the buildings and the new tree planters. To provide handicap access to the buildings, the sidewalk should be raised to slope evenly from the curb to the entrances of each building. Variations in the building entrance elevations can be handled through sloped transitions or low walls and planters. Patterns and borders which are designed into the new paving are intended to provide texture to the pavement and delineate the public sidewalk area from the private-paved area in front of the buildings. As shown in Figure 2.5, this area could be personalized with planters and furniture, or used as an outdoor dining area. Covered eating areas can be created several ways depending on the building scale, height and architectural character. Freestanding umbrellas with wood tables and chairs are recommended for areas in front of the historic townhouse buildings. Because these are small two-story buildings with one-story porches, awnings and canopies which are attached to buildings need to be small and of limited projection (one to three feet) if they are to avoid overwhelming the facades. Fabric awnings and canopies are appropriate on these buildings where they can be attached to the primary facade of the building, rather than the edge of the roof. Canopies and awnings should not be used to extend the roof area of the primary roof of the building because this will interfere with the visual unity of the townhouse row-buildings and make the display





**Figure 2.3**  
Typical Sidewalk  
Improvements in Retail  
Areas; Design and  
illustration by APA

windows dark and hard to see. Larger and more expansive canopies could be used at larger two-story buildings where the scale of the building can accommodate a larger forward projection.



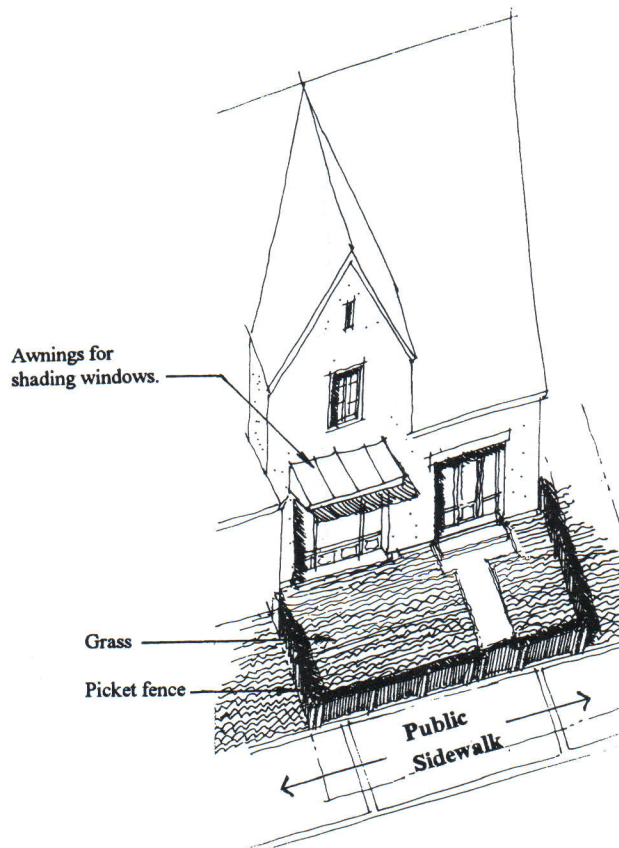
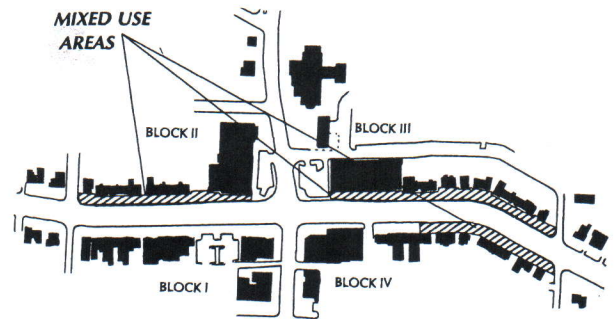
**Figure 2.4**  
Diagram of Retail Areas in  
the Pedestrian  
Environment

**Figure 2.5**  
Personalizing Front Yard  
Space in Retail Areas;  
Illustration by PMA



**Mixed-Use Areas** - A narrower sidewalk scheme is suggested along Warwick Boulevard in the areas where retail use is less intensive and the sidewalks do not already extend up to the buildings as shown in Figure 2.6. These areas are referred to as **mixed-use** areas. The design scheme for mixed-use areas features planters next to the curb with a narrower sidewalk allowing for a lawn area in front of the building, as illustrated in Figure 2.8. As residential uses are replaced by retail uses corresponding adjustments to the treatment of the area between the sidewalk and the buildings may be needed. Improvements to front yards adjacent to mixed-use streetscapes, where there is a green area between the sidewalk and the buildings, should maintain the character of a compact urban lawn or garden. Greater enclosure and privacy in residential front yards is possible with low hedges or wood picket fencing similar to other residential areas in the Village as shown in Figure 2.7. Decorative paving in the lawn areas should be done in high-quality paving materials to match the new sidewalks in order to maintain a unified appearance.

**Figure 2.6**  
Diagram of Mixed-use  
Areas in the Pedestrian  
Environment



**Figure 2.7**  
Personalizing Front Yard  
Space in Mixed-use Areas;  
Illustration by PMA





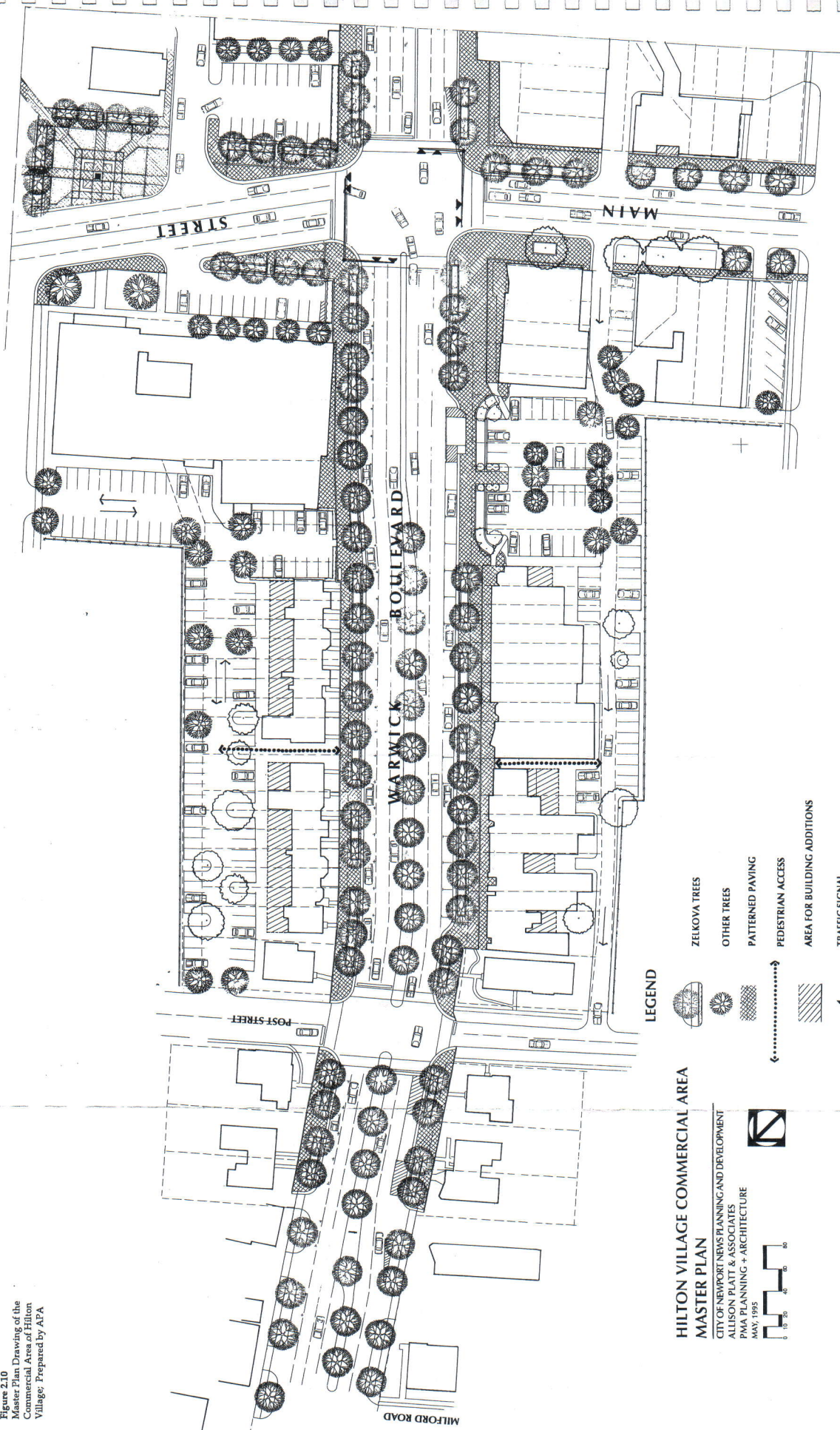
**Figure 2.8**  
Typical Sidewalk  
Improvements in Mixed-  
Use and Residential Areas;  
Design by APA, illustration  
by Eric Hyne



**Figure 2.9**  
Existing Conditions in  
Mixed-Use Areas; Photo by  
PMA



Figure 2.10  
Master Plan Drawing of the  
Commercial Area of Hilton  
Village. Prepared by APA



# LEGEND

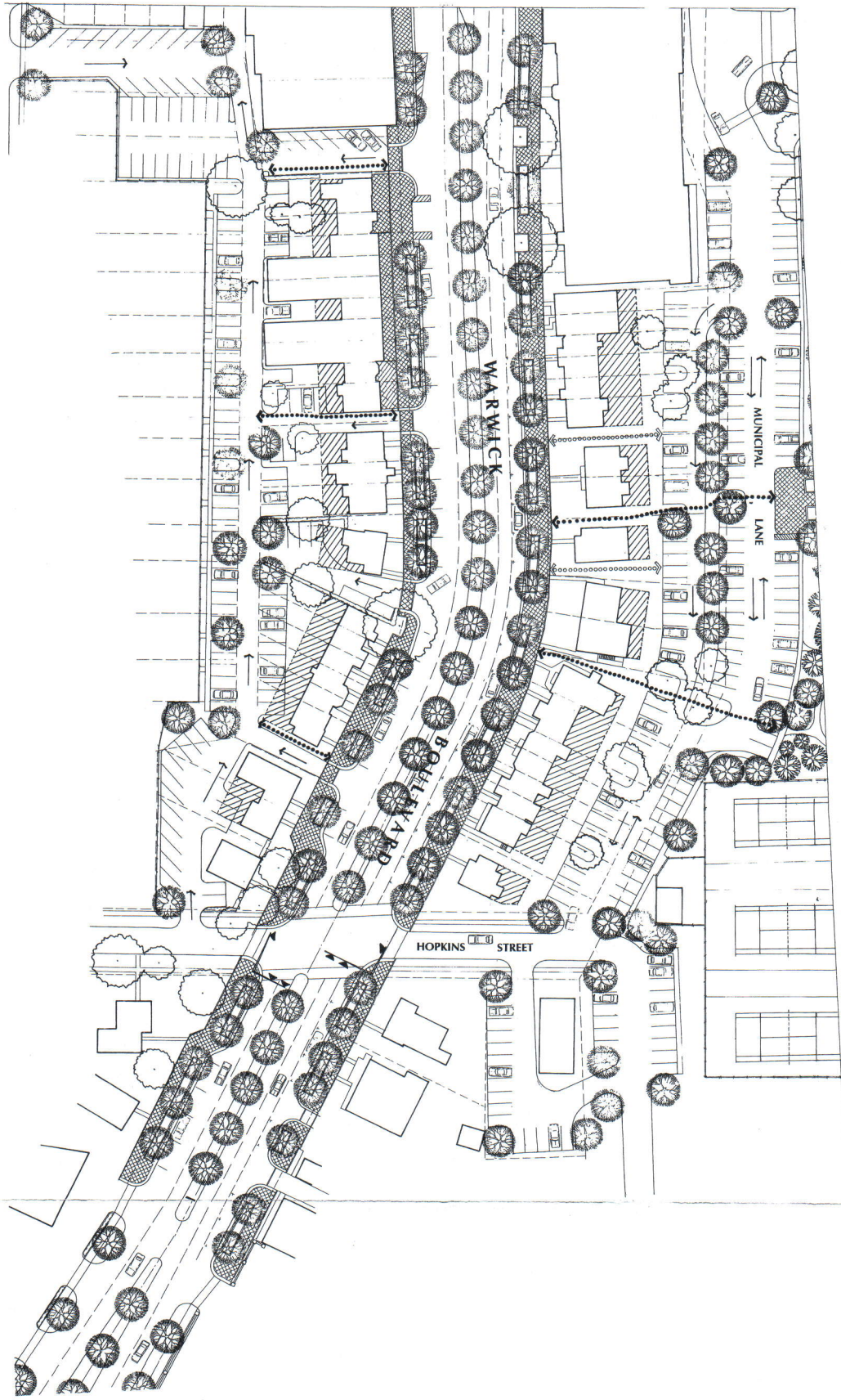
- ZELKOVA TREES
- OTHER TREES
- PATTERNED PAVING
- PEDESTRIAN ACCESS
- AREA FOR BUILDING ADDITIONS
- TRAFFIC SIGNAL

## HILTON VILLAGE COMMERCIAL AREA MASTER PLAN

CITY OF NEWPORT NEWS PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT  
ALLISON PLATT & ASSOCIATES  
PMA PLANNING + ARCHITECTURE  
MAY, 1995





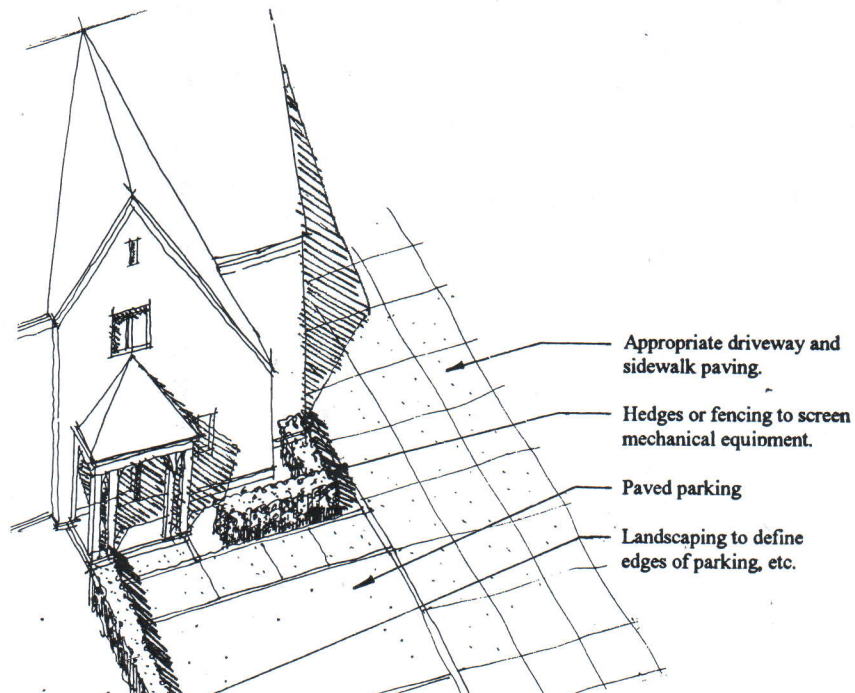




**Rear Yard Improvements** - The rear yards of buildings along Warwick Boulevard exhibit a wide range of uses and adaptations. Building owners and businesses should work to improve the rear yards of their property so that they are neat and attractive, and improve the appearance and efficiency of available parking. Improvements to landscaping, lighting, walkways, parking and paving should be added where possible, like those shown in Figure 2.11. The alleys need improved lighting, especially if visitors will be encouraged to park there. Because there are utility poles along the alleys, lighting could be attached to the existing poles and supplemented with additional fixtures either mounted on poles or mounted on buildings.

**Alleyway Parking Opportunities** - One of the ways to increase the amount of parking in the commercial area would be to better utilize the rear-yard areas of commercial properties along Warwick Boulevard. The concept of consolidating these areas envisions that outbuildings and other obstacles could be removed so that well-designed paved parking areas could be installed. The Master Plan drawing illustrates how this could be accomplished for Block II and Block IV (see Figure 2.10). These consolidated areas would need to be landscaped, lighted, and improved in order to make the alleyway areas more appealing and safer for residents and businesses.

**Acquiring Additional Land for Parking in the Alleyways** -The concept of acquiring land on the opposite side of the alley from Warwick Boulevard to add parking could expand the parking available to businesses and residents alike. This would require approximately 25 feet of depth to add standard perpendicular parking spaces adjacent to the alley. Garages could continue to be accommodated if a more compact design was developed which maximized open parking spaces. A screen fence would be needed between the alleyway and the residential back yards.



**Figure 2.11**  
Concepts for Improvements  
to Rear Yards; Sketch by  
PMA



## **2.3 Circulation**

**Vehicular Circulation** - No radical changes to vehicular circulation are recommended within the commercial area but the changes which are recommended are essential to the overall success of the Village as an attraction. The recommendations are meant to accomplish the following:

- ❑ Provide better parking and better access to parking so that more people arriving by car will be aware of parking and able to reach it without difficulty. As part of this effort, the parallel parking spaces on the west side of Warwick Boulevard will be widened to allow an additional two feet of width to improve safety and comfort when leaving and entering the automobile.
- ❑ One important improvement to vehicular circulation will be the addition of a traffic light at the intersection of Hopkins Street and Warwick Boulevard. This has been planned for some time to accommodate the additional traffic which will result from the opening of the new library. It is also felt that an additional light in this location will serve to slow traffic moving along Warwick Boulevard within the Village, which frequently travels at considerably higher speeds than those posted. Additional parking will be added along Municipal Lane to serve the library, the new park to the north of Municipal Lane, and the buildings in Block IV.

**Pedestrian Circulation and ADA Access** - In order for the commercial area to succeed, it is essential that pedestrian circulation be considered of primary importance. The plan shows crosswalks that are wider and more clearly marked than those now in existence and handicap ramps at all corners. Improved sidewalk grading will provide barrier-free access to many buildings.

Two handicap parking spaces will be provided along the south side of Warwick Boulevard. Additional handicap and van spaces will need to be provided in the planned parking areas off the alleys and along Municipal Lane as these are constructed. Access for persons with disabilities along the sidewalks and from the sidewalk into the commercial establishments within the Village has also been provided in the plan.

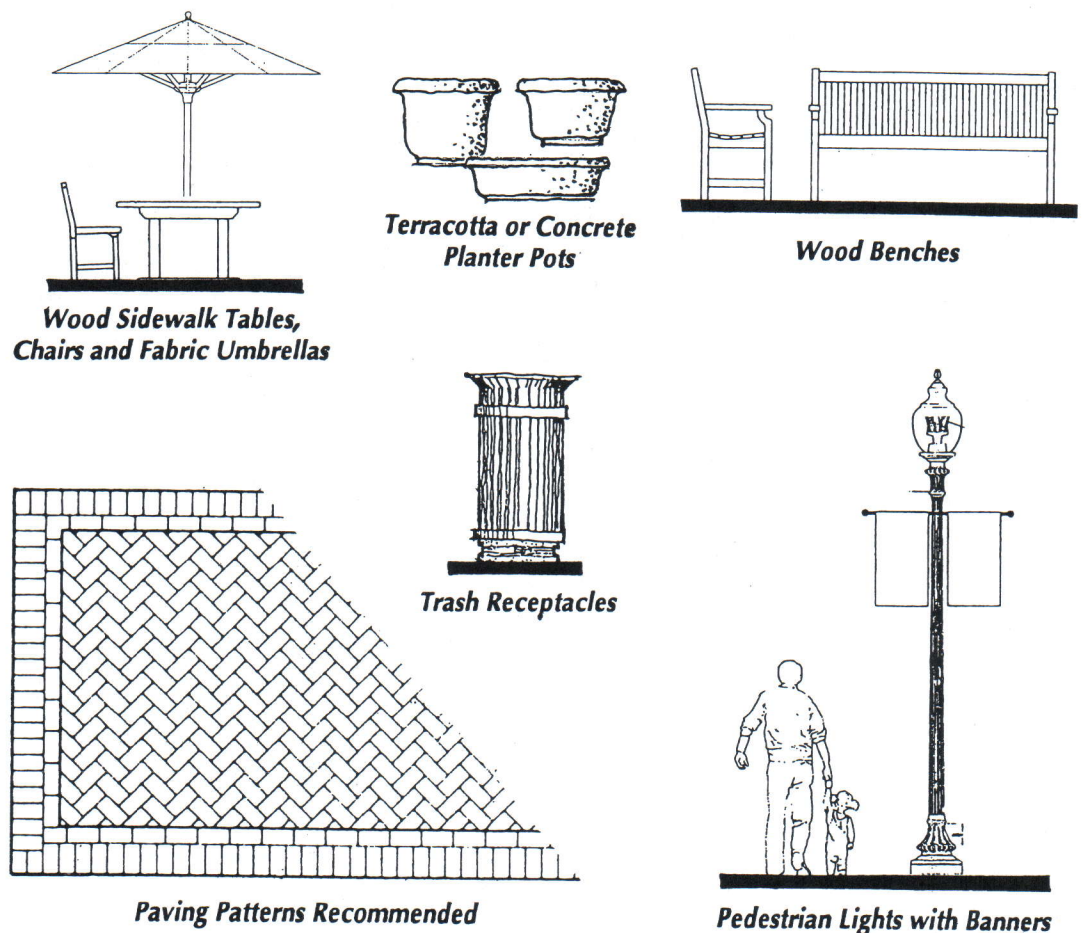
**Pedestrian and Vehicular Connections to the Alleys** - If opportunities for visitor parking are to be increased in the alleyways, consideration must be given to the design and visual quality of the pedestrian pathways and driveways connecting Warwick Boulevard with the alleys. The concept for these connections is to provide attractive, well-marked, and well-lighted pathways for pedestrians moving to and from parking in the alleyways and businesses on Warwick Boulevard. In most cases these pathways would be on private property, and so rights-of-way would have to be acquired, or the property owner would need to agree to having an existing driveway or path used by the public, perhaps in exchange for assistance with improvements.



## **2.4 Streetscape Paving Materials and Street Furniture**

The colors, materials, and street furniture recommended for the streetscape are meant to enhance the overall "English Village" character of the district. A range of light tan colors is recommended for the concrete pavers to maintain the appearance of the aged concrete which was originally used for sidewalks in Hilton. The planter edge and concrete strips are recommended to be a light beige color. It is recommended that the new pedestrian light poles match the ones currently installed along Warwick Boulevard. Although they are not original, they are styled after mid-twentieth century light posts which could have been added during the development of the area. The existing street lights (or a similar version) are supplied by VDOT and will remain in the median.

Benches recommended are "English Park" type heavy wooden benches constructed of hardwoods and anchored in place. The color recommended for all metal work (lights, trash receptacles and sign posts) is a high-gloss dark green. These and other elements appropriate streetscape furnishings are shown in Figure 2.12.



**Figure 2.12**  
Paving and Street Furniture  
for Streetscape Areas;  
Sketch by PMA



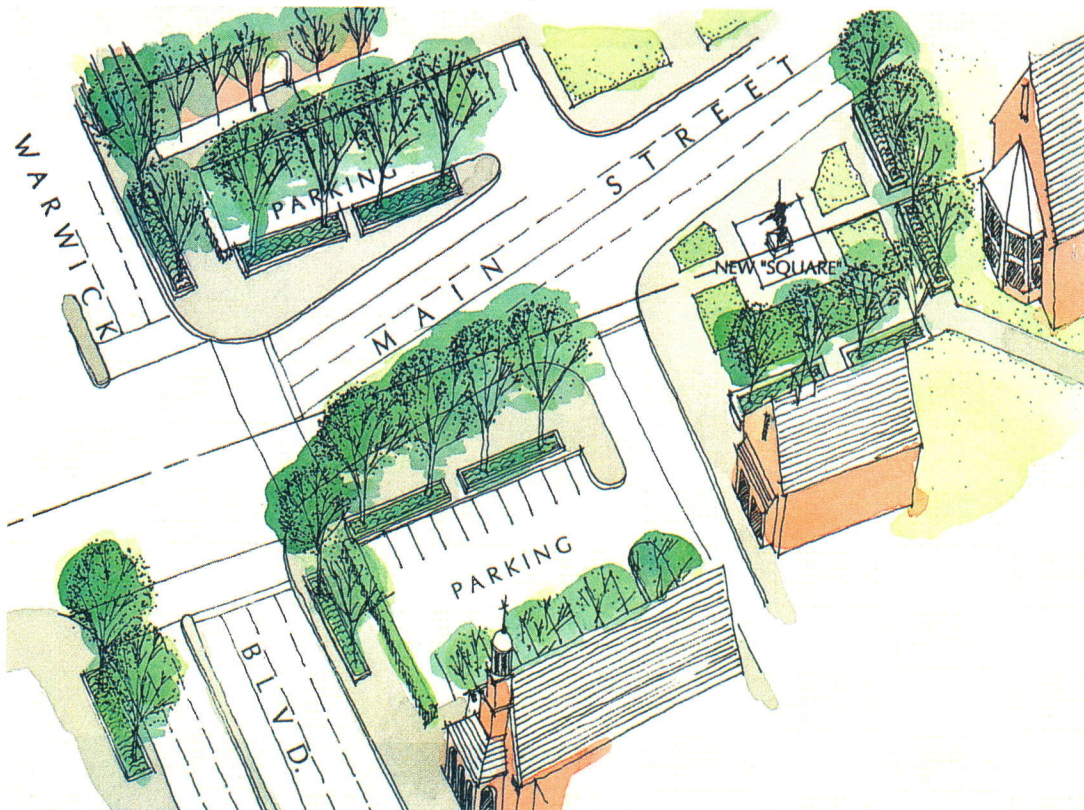
## 2.5 Other Parking Opportunities

In the future when the Village commercial area becomes much more successful, parking needs should be re-examined. Possible locations for additional parking lots include the area to the west of the tennis courts and various properties at the edge of the Village along Warwick Boulevard which could be purchased and converted to landscaped parking lots. It is not recommended that any additional properties be demolished within the Village in order to provide additional parking.

## 2.6 Open Space Improvements

There are two open spaces which are important to the study area. The first is the area of the former Hilton Square which is now framed by the First United Methodist Church, the Hilton Baptist Church and the new Library. This is the focal point of the commercial area and has great potential to become a civic open space for pedestrians. The second important open space is the land between First United Methodist Church, the Library and the railroad tracks which is planned as a park space.

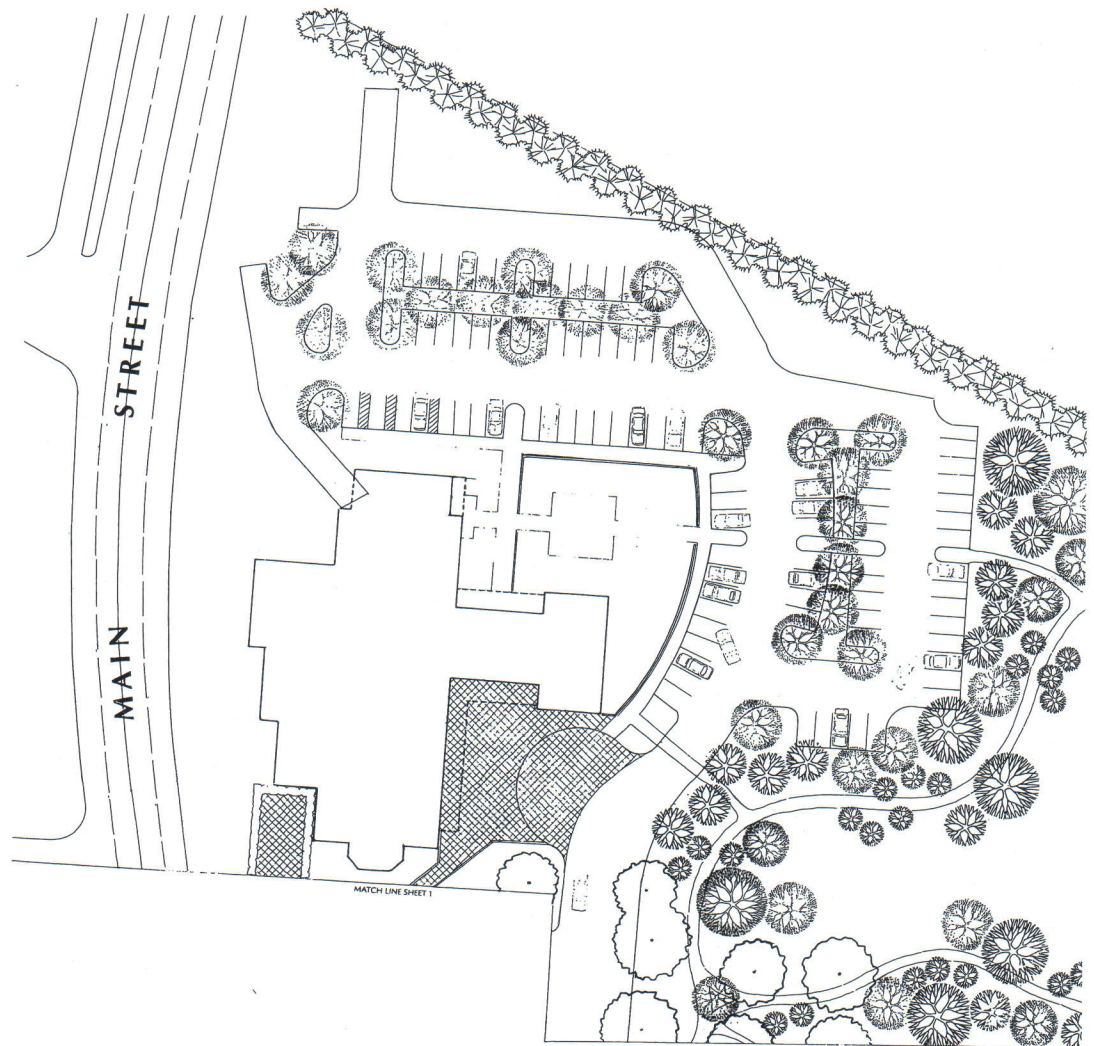
**Re-establishing "Hilton Square"** - A major feature of the plan is the re-establishment of a new town square at the intersection of Warwick Boulevard and Main Street, meant to be reminiscent of the original Hilton Square. The concept restores a formal order to the center of the Historic District through adjustments to the parking areas and the use of trees, planters and paving patterns that emphasize and mark the Main Street axis as shown in Figure 2.13.



**Figure 2.13**  
Re-establishing Hilton  
Square; Sketch by PMA



The new square consists of a paved plaza defined by low walls, planters, and trees featuring an area for a focal element such as a statue or large sculpture. The parking areas next to the churches have been adjusted to be more rectangular in order to reinforce the lines of the buildings. New high-branching trees in planters will frame the parking areas, create a pedestrian scale between Main Street and the parking lots, and reduce the visual impact of the paved areas. These trees will also direct and frame the view of the new square.



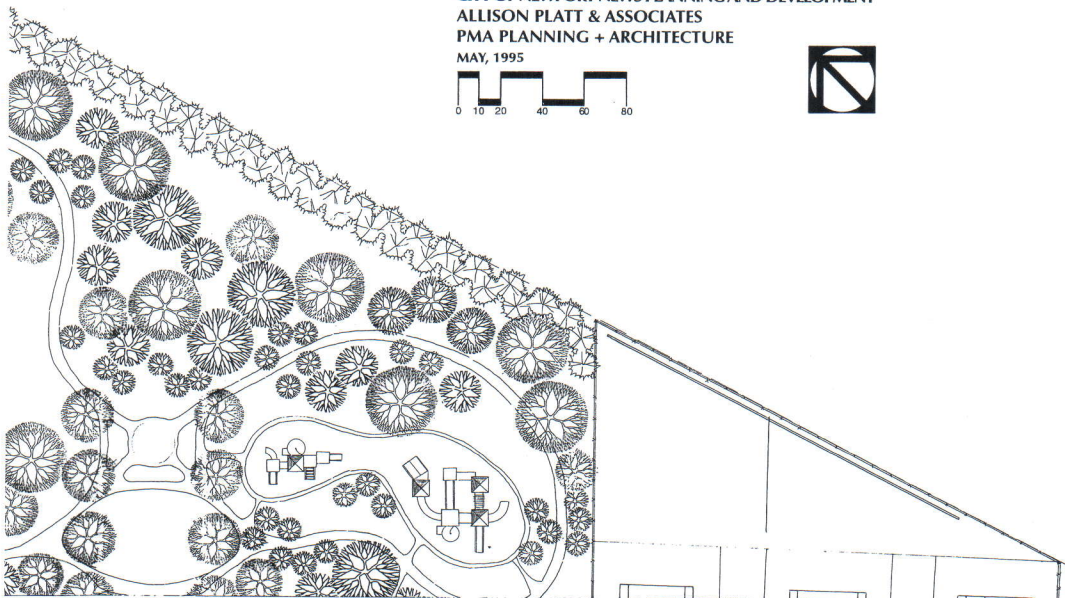
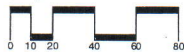


Smaller trees with denser heads will be used along the sides of the church buildings and the fire station to provide an edge along the outside of the parking areas and the new square, shading it in summer. These trees will also be used along Hammond Street and Main Street to define the edges of the streets to the northwest of the square. The new square will provide a civic space in the heart of the Village which will strengthen the relationship of the new library to the existing buildings and establish a public space which can be the focus of the community.

**New Neighborhood Park** - An open space has been planned for the area north of Municipal Lane and east of the new library. The design shown in Figure 2.14 illustrates some recommended changes to the original design, making it more park-like. This will be a welcome addition of green space near the commercial area, and should be well used by the neighborhood, visitors, and library patrons for recreation and relaxation.

**HILTON VILLAGE COMMERCIAL AREA  
OPEN SPACE MASTER PLAN**

CITY OF NEWPORT NEWS PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT  
ALLISON PLATT & ASSOCIATES  
PMA PLANNING + ARCHITECTURE  
MAY, 1995



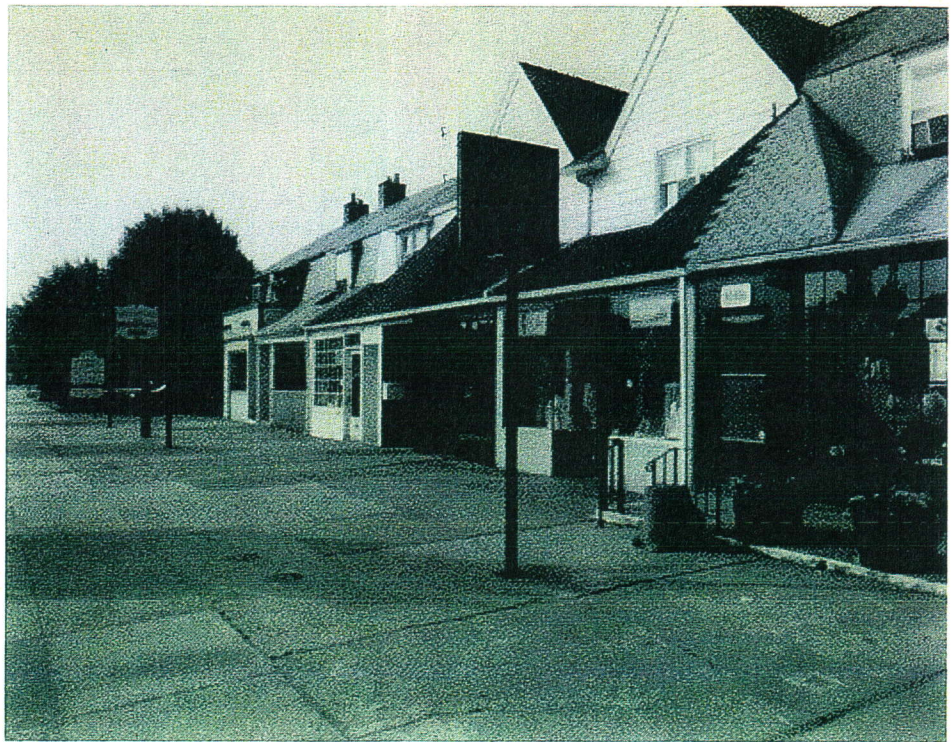
**Figure 2.14**  
New Park Plan; prepared  
by APA



**Figure 3.1**

TOP - Computer Rendering of Proposed Streetscape and Facade Improvements, Image by PMA.

BOTTOM- Photograph of Existing Conditions in Block I, Photograph by PMA.





## **3.1 Why Facades are Important in the Commercial Area**

The architecture of Hilton Village along Warwick Boulevard is the most significant attribute of this commercial area. This is where the "English Village" feeling is the strongest in the neighborhood. The fronts of the row buildings form an urban wall along the street which creates the village-like setting. The unity of the roofs, walls, and the Tudor-derivative forms and details are the devices which create this image. The "Village" architecture is what makes this area unique and appealing for residents, visitors, as well as an effective image for specialty retail businesses.

Originally designed as residential buildings, many of the row-buildings in Hilton Village have been converted to commercial use along Warwick Boulevard as the City developed. Conversions to commercial use have occurred without the coordination and the careful design necessary to maintain the original architectural character. The need for large display windows, flexible entrances, larger floor areas, and a tendency for individual expression accounts for the expansions, additions, and alterations which have covered up the original features of these graceful buildings. The fact that each row-building is split into eight to ten properties has made it difficult to maintain common architectural features, such as roofs, walls, and porch entrances, as owners expressed individual preferences rather than maintaining the character of the original design. The chaotic appearance of the buildings and the substandard condition of the interior spaces present a major problem in attracting new retail and business activity in the commercial area which are necessary for stabilization and growth.

This section identifies a series of strategies for restoring the historic architectural character to the commercial area and meeting the needs of the commercial uses as a way of strengthening its viability. Section 3.2 examines ways to restore the character of the original row-buildings for a wide range of uses. Section 3.3 examines the role of buildings which have been built since the original construction and which contribute to the Historic District (known as contributing buildings) and ways they can be enhanced. Section 3.4 examines ways to improve buildings which do not contribute to the Historic District (known as non-contributing buildings) and bring them into greater harmony with the overall neighborhood.

## **3.2 Facade Improvement Concepts for Row-Buildings**

The row-building designs are unique because of the use of architectural features, such as porches, roofs, and stucco wall surfaces which give the structures a unified and cohesive "English Village" appearance. The original design envisioned these units being owned and managed by the Shipping Board, where the unity of the row-buildings could be maintained. When they were sold as individual townhouses and homes no provision was made for coordinated maintenance of their common



features. In order to restore the unity and character of the original design, facade improvements for row-buildings must reassert and unify these elements. In order to accomplish this goal, cooperation will be essential between adjacent owners. The concepts presented in this section illustrate how this can be achieved while accommodating the new commercial uses which have developed.

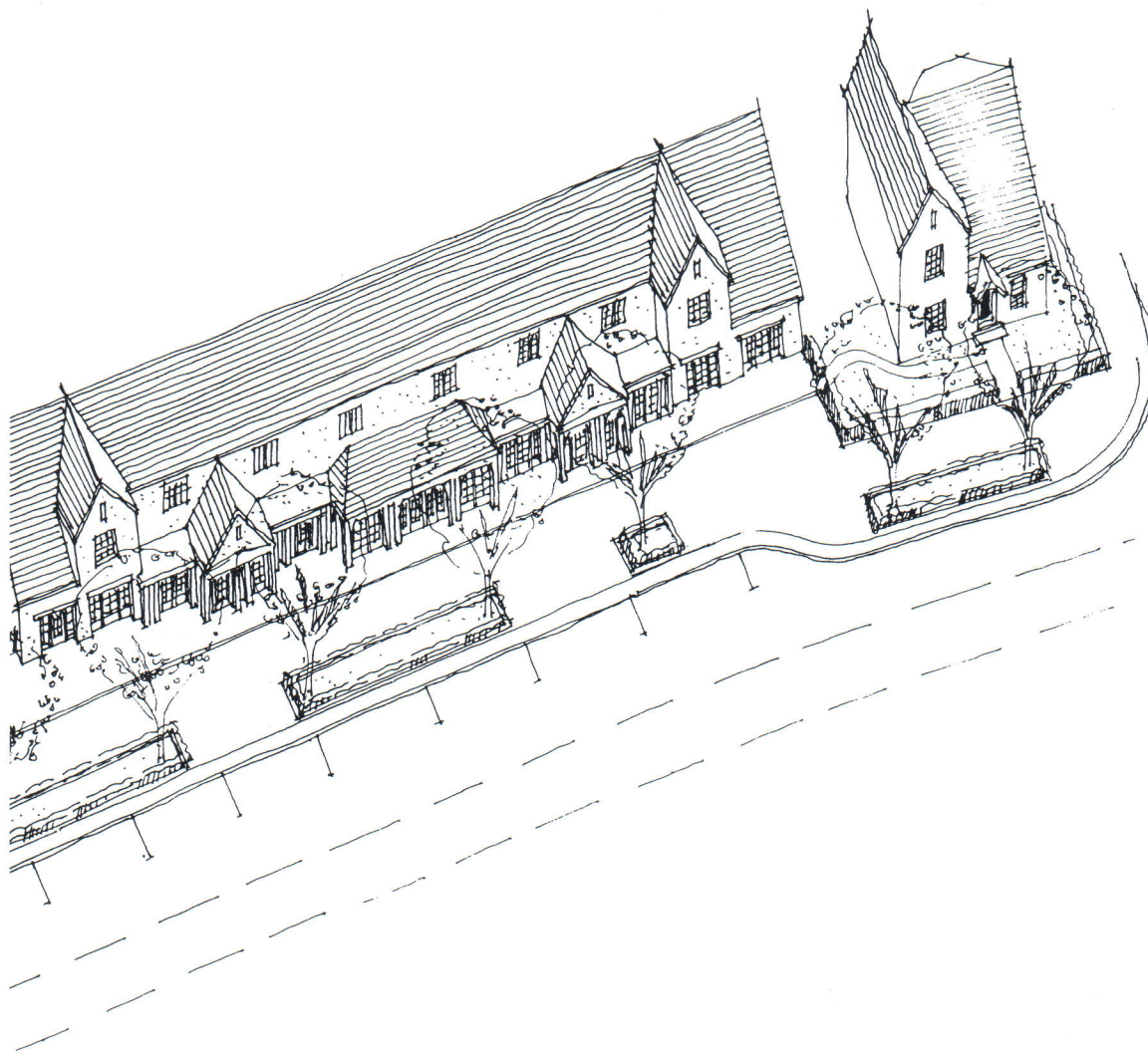
**Re-establishing the Rhythm of Porches and Roofs** - In areas where row buildings have been heavily altered with front additions and the front porches have been lost or covered up, it is important to re-establish the character and rhythm of the original front porch elements. In these areas some porches have been completely removed and replaced with new construction. In others, the roof structure remains but the columns, railings, and brackets which define the character of the buildings have been removed. In others, the original porch may remain under a remodeled facade. On end units, where porches were recessed into the building, the porches have been converted to interior space. Front expansions and infill have been constructed over the years to add display and storefront areas which did not exist in the original buildings.

A traditional restorative approach to improving the facades would be to remove the front expansions where they do not contribute to the historic character and restore the original porches and facades. This approach should be used where the original residential use will remain. However, a return to the original facade does not





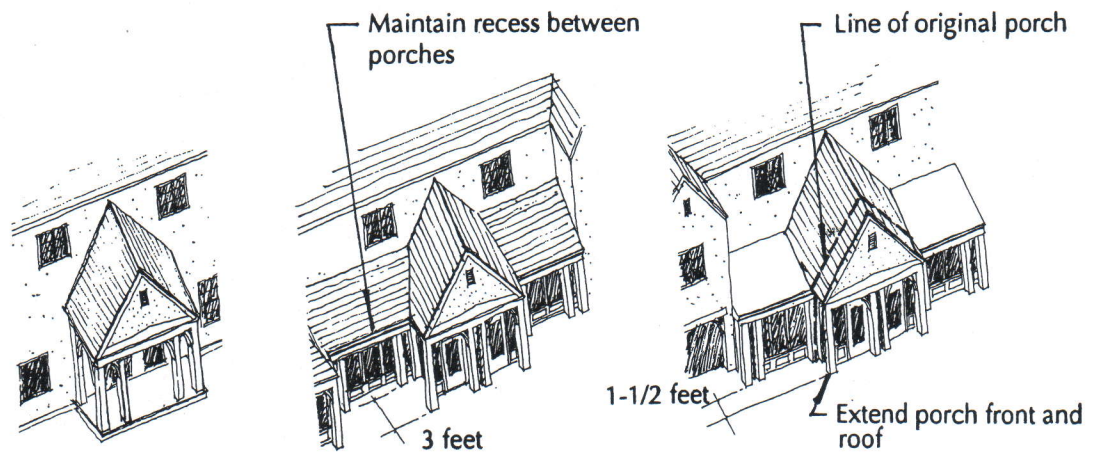
address the need for retail display areas and storefronts where commercial uses exist. In fact, these storefront areas should project forward of the main building facades in order to avoid large openings in the primary stucco face of the building which would weaken their solid appearance. A traditional "Main Street" approach where each building is dealt with separately would not work toward the feeling of "wholeness" of each row-building and its relationship to the overall Village design. Therefore it is important to work toward a collective and unified vision in recovering the character of the original design.



**Figure 3.2**  
Axonometric View of Facade  
Improvements on  
Commercial Row-Buildings  
PMA



A special rehabilitation strategy for commercial uses has been conceived which accommodates the need for retail display and which can recover the unity and character of the Village architecture. As shown in Figure 3.3, this strategy emphasizes re-establishment of the projecting porches to restore the character, rhythm and variety to the row-building fronts. Where these porch elements still exist they can be re-established by peeling away the construction which covers them and restoring their original details, as shown in Figure 3.3a. Retail displays and enclosed entrances can be accommodated within these porch areas by constructing traditional glass storefronts back behind the columns of the porch. In this way the porch enclosure will be "glassed-in" but still allow the details of the original porches to be prominent. Additional display areas are possible between the porch elements as long as they are recessed, or stepped back from the porch front. Set backs of three feet or greater are preferred between the front of the porch and the adjacent display area so that some variety can be achieved along the front of the buildings, as shown in Figure 3.3b. Where storefronts have already been built flush to the original porch fronts and the historic porches have been removed, it is suggested that the porch be reconstructed one-and-one-half-feet (1.5 feet) in front of the original porch front to match the original porch details, as shown in Figure 3.3c. This will re-establish the porch and roof forms and allow most of the existing display windows to remain. The limit of 1.5 feet is recommended to keep the porches from dominating the primary



**Figure 3.3**  
Concepts for Re-establishing  
the Rhythm of Porches and  
Roofs; PMA

a) Restore porch to original design if alterations have been minimal.

b) Where infill between porches has occurred, restore porch roof, facade and woodwork. Traditionally detailed glass storefront, display windows and entrances can be recessed behind the columns. Infill areas should be setback by at least three feet from the front of the porch.

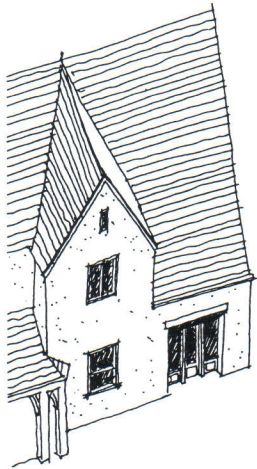
c) Where infill construction is flush with the front of the existing porch, then reconstruct the porch and roof one-and-one-half feet forward of the existing porch to restore the presence of this element. All of the original details and materials should be matched.



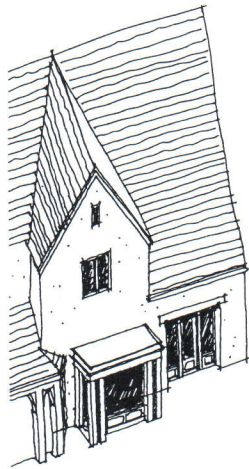
building facades. Matching the original Vermont slate in roof construction and the original materials and details of the porches will be of the utmost importance in achieving a unified effect.

**Re-emphasizing the Gable Facades** - The end units of each row-building are unique and require a different strategy than the interior units. These have two-story gable facades with recessed porches. Most of the porches have been infilled to provide more space inside the unit. Some have front projections and roof extensions which have been added to expand their floor space. In the original design these two-story gabled units played an important role in providing a strong visual upward thrust which marked the end of the row-building and gave the building an upright appearance. It is important to maintain the height of the two-story, gable end because of its upward proportion. It is also important to emphasize the original porch opening of the building.

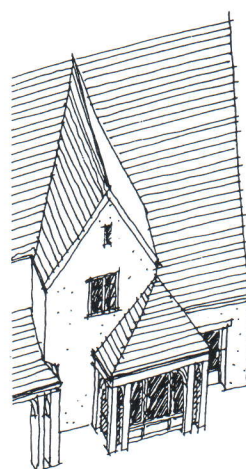
Several approaches are considered for these end-gable units due to the wide range of alterations which exists. Where the original facade has not been covered by a forward projection, it is recommended that the former porch opening be treated as



a) Original end unit design with porch opening enclosed with traditional storefront windows and doors.



b) End unit with projecting bay window.



c) Alternative porch may be used at some locations.

**Figure 3.4**  
Concepts for Treating  
Porches at End-Units; PMA



**Figure 3.5**  
Concepts for Areas between  
Porches; PMA



a) Low-slope roof over infill areas. Use this approach where the roof lines should be minimal to emphasize the original stucco facade.



b) Slate roof over infill areas. Where the roof construction is original the slate should be preserved or restored to match existing colors. Where a new roof area is planned, align the top of the roof with the sills of the upper windows. Use slate to match the existing slate.

the entrance to the building and enclosed with glass doors and sidelights which are in-set to allow the porch opening to read through as shown in Figure 3.4a. An additional display area can be added as a projecting bay under the main gable to reinforce this two-story element as shown in Figure 3.4b. In some special cases where the porch rhythm allows and there is a need to transition to adjacent projections and roofing, it may be acceptable to add a hipped-roofed porch element as shown in Figure 3.4c which allows the stucco facade of the gable end to read through.

**Treatment of Areas Between Porches** - The areas between porches which serve as commercial storefronts and display areas should be re-designed to make graceful transitions between the porch walls and roofs of the adjacent porch elements or main building. They should be recessed back from the front of adjacent porches to highlight and distinguish these elements. These infill areas should be treated like an extension of the porch elements, with columns to match the original porches, lintel beams and eaves heights to match the original details. The roofs over infill areas should be handled one of the following two ways as shown in Figure 3.5. A sloped roof clad in slate to match the original slate roofs is appropriate over infill areas where there is not a two-story gabled facade and the infill area projects minimally. These roofs should meet the primary building facade just below the second-story windows. In areas where two-story facades are present, or in other areas which are appropriate, a low-sloped roof treatment is recommended to allow the original building to read more prominently.



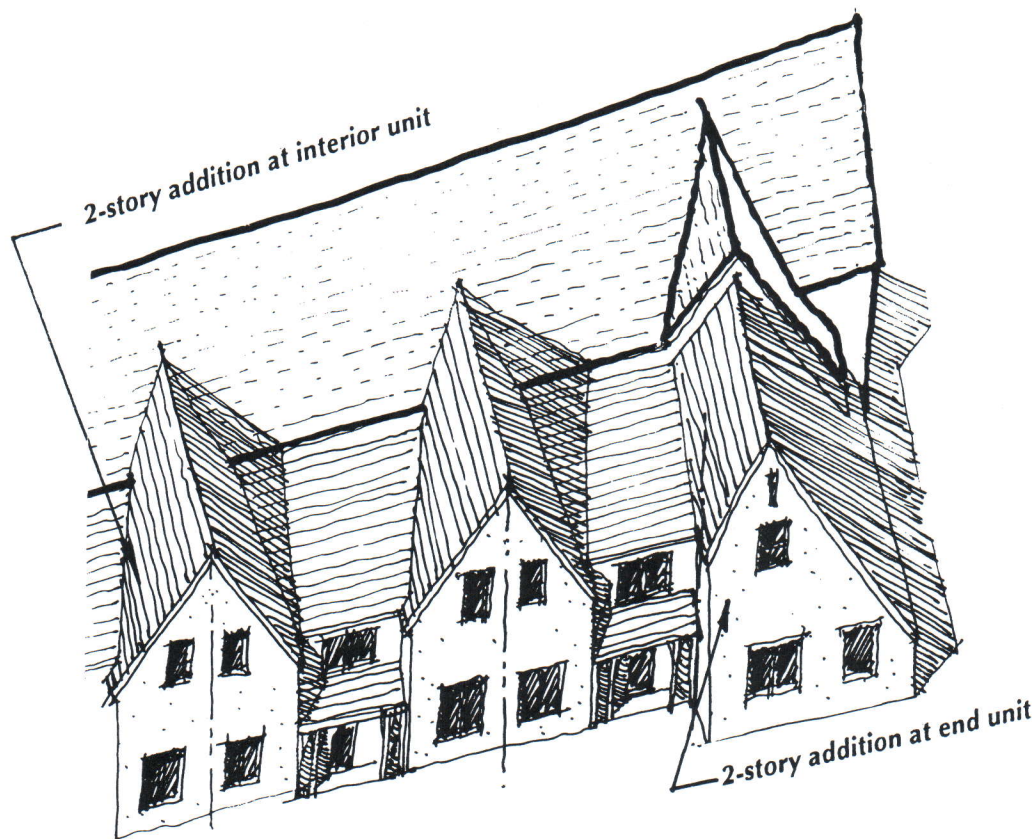


Figure 3.6  
Concepts for Rear-Yard  
Additions; PMA

**Rear-yard Additions to Historic Row-Buildings** - Rear-yard additions for these buildings should allow expansion of the first and second floors. In most locations these buildings can be expanded 15 to 20 feet and still leave enough site area for parking and other site needs. Limits recommended for rear additions are shown on the Master Plan (Figure 2.10). These extend approximately 20 feet back from the original rear line of the buildings. This limit is recommended to allow sufficient room for future consolidation of the site areas for parking. It is recommended that new construction of storage buildings be prohibited in the rear lots of the commercial area so that site area can be better utilized for parking or more substantial additions. Figure 3.6 illustrates some basic strategies for designing rear-yard additions. Emphasis should be placed on following the roof characteristics, window patterns and proportions, and materials of the original construction for rear additions. Rear additions along Municipal Lane should be designed to be the secondary entrances to the buildings. Emphasis in this area should be on creating an interesting, presentable, and cohesive facade to these buildings. Their location along Municipal Lane and proximity to good parking make them a good location for future commercial growth.

**Mending Disruptions Where Buildings have been Removed** - Only a few buildings in the commercial area have been lost over the years. These are shown in Figure 3.9. Of these, one of the most significant losses has been the loss of the gable unit (formerly 10341 Warwick Boulevard) where the public parking lot is located near the Beecroft and Bull store. This has created a very unfinished appearance at the end of the building. To remedy this a new gable end could be constructed at 10345 Warwick Boulevard over an existing front display area as shown in Figure 3.8. This would provide an strong visual end to the building and



**Figure 3.7**  
Proposed Facade Design for  
10231 & 10233 Warwick  
Blvd., Illustration by PMA



mend the visual disruption by re-establishing the gable form. It would also cover the inappropriate front porch addition which currently exists. Two interior units at 10231 and 10233 Warwick Boulevard were lost and reconstructed without continuing the original roof lines or other features. This building interrupts the unity and wholeness of the original row-building because it projects forward from the original buildings about six feet for two stories disrupting the unity of the roof and facade of the entire row-building. Figure 3.7 illustrates one way of altering the facade to reintroduce typical roof and gable forms without having to tear back the entire facade.

### **3.3 Recommendations for Contributing Buildings**

Several of the buildings which have been built since the original construction of Hilton Village contribute to the character of the Historic District and are referred to as "Contributing Buildings". These include the Beecroft and Bull store, the old Village Theater building, the sanctuary buildings of First United Methodist Church and Hilton Baptist Church, and the Fire Station.

**The Beecroft and Bull Store** - This is a contributing building because of its gabled slate roof, its English Tudor facade treatment, and its graceful and appropriate storefront design. Although its construction date is unknown, this building relates to the architecture of the neighborhood and illustrates that buildings can be added to the commercial area which strengthen its image and character. The color of the painted brick facade should continue to match stucco colors so that the building will relate to the original row-buildings. The canopy awning over the display windows illustrates the proper application and proportions for fabric awnings for gable-front buildings. Window and door openings are also good examples of the proportions and quality of materials which are necessary to maintain the image of the district in new construction and alterations.





Figure 3.8  
New facade for 10345  
Warwick Boulevard;  
illustration by PMA

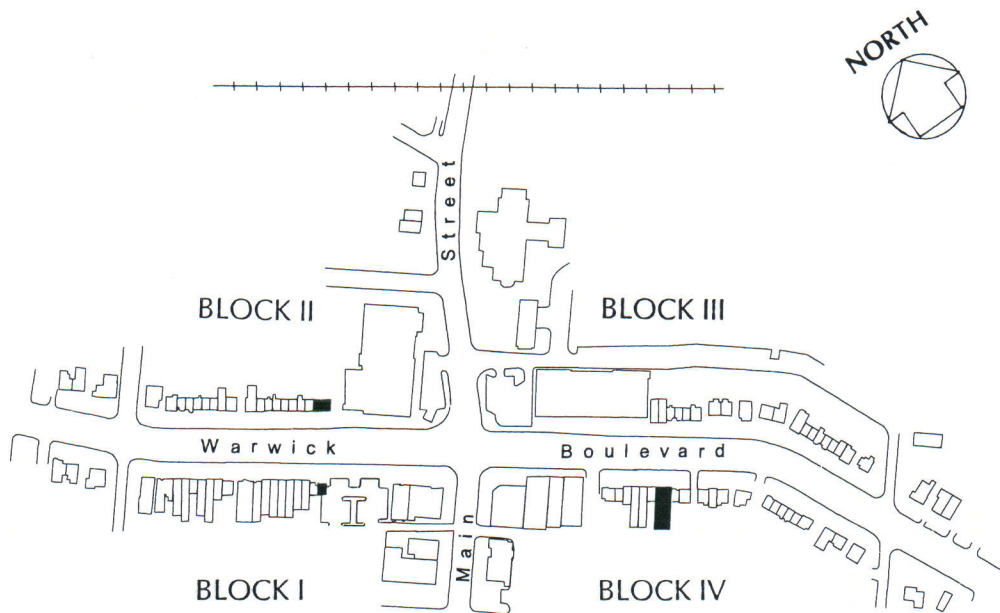


Figure 3.9  
Locations of Demolished  
Buildings; PMA



**Figure 3.10**  
Proposed Improvements at  
Main and Warwick;  
Illustration by PMA



**The Old Village Theater Building** - Although this building is different in design from the original buildings in Hilton, it is significant because of its distinctive Art Deco style. Built in the 1930s as a movie theater, the Village Theater building has been a center of activity and an icon of Hilton Village for most of its history. The neon pylon sign which reads "Village" is one of the most identifiable landmarks in the streetscape recalling the prominence of Hilton Village in the early 20th century.

This building has undergone several remodelings since its original construction which have masked the clarity of its Art Deco details and lines. Cedar shake shingles, added to the marquee in the 1960s, cover a banded metal and neon frieze, as well as the ticket booth. Shutters installed at the display cases clutter the streamlined design of the stucco facade and they call too much attention to these openings. Drain pipes and conduits which roam over the facade detract from the clean lines of the original facade. But most importantly, the paint scheme of the building does not reflect the banded design of the Art Deco period. Figure 3.10 illustrates improvements which could restore the Art Deco style of this important building.

**The Fire Station and Church Sanctuaries** - These buildings represent a different architectural style than the original buildings in Hilton Village. Their walls are red brick and they have a scale which is somewhat larger than the original buildings. Despite this, each of the buildings has gabled slate roofs which relate somewhat to the gabled architecture of the neighborhood. Additionally they each have highly articulated facades which are comfortable within the residential style of the Historic District. Finally they represent the completion of institutional buildings on the eastern side of Warwick Boulevard which were never completed in the original construction, but which reflect the latter growth of Hilton Village over the mid-twentieth century. The cohesiveness of their red brick facades binds these buildings together and provides some unity to the east side of the intersection of Warwick Boulevard and Main Street.





The new Hilton Branch Library will fit within these more institutional building forms as a new landmark of Hilton Village.

These significant buildings should be maintained in their existing form. The Historic District boundaries should be adjusted to include the Fire Station building to ensure that it will be maintained appropriately in this context. The later additions to the Fire Station should probably be removed if the station is relocated so that the site area can be opened up. However, if retained, it should receive facade improvements which make it more presentable as a perimeter building for the new Hilton Square.

### **3.4 Recommendations for Non-Contributing Buildings**

Buildings around the west side of the intersection of Warwick and Main are considered "Non-Contributing" buildings because they do not relate to the residential architecture of the Village. These include the Abbitt and Marshall Building (formerly a Roses Store), the Silverman Furs Building, the old Telephone Building, and the buildings at 10247 and 10249 Warwick Boulevard.

**Background Buildings** - The old C&P Telephone Building and buildings at 10247-10249 Warwick Boulevard are one-story buildings which have a simple storefront style of architecture. These should be treated as "background" mercantile buildings with a subdued architectural facade treatment. Figure 3.10 illustrates how simple awnings, cornices, and storefront designs can be used to give these buildings a traditional mercantile building appearance which would be compatible with the district, yet not attempt to bring them into the two-story style of the residential buildings.



**Figure 3.11**  
Proposed Improvements at  
Main and Warwick;

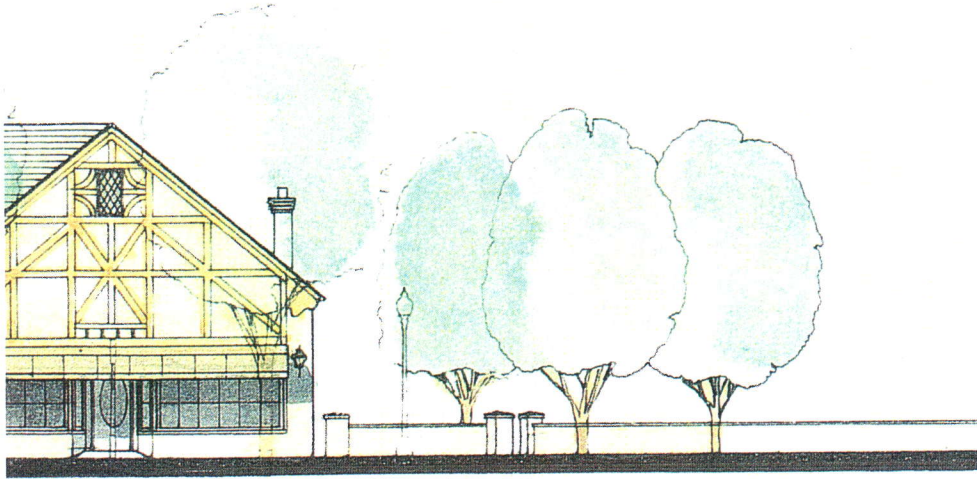


**Foreground Buildings** - The Abbitt and Marshall Building and Silverman Furs Building are prominent buildings in the commercial district because of their location at the corners of the Main Street intersection. Each building plays a significant role in marking and defining the heart of the commercial area. Each could be enhanced to contribute more to the image and character of the commercial area and overall Historic District.

The Abbitt and Marshall Building is a two-story 1940s mercantile building with a large, storefront projection along the first story. Several approaches could be taken to enhance this building. One approach would be to reconstruct the storefront projection to be more compatible with the traditional architecture of the district and enhance the 1940s character of the existing upper story. Another approach could be to alter the exterior sufficiently to introduce gabled roof forms which relate more directly to the residential character of the neighborhood. This approach would establish a much stronger presence of this building on the corner, as shown in Figure 3.11. Typical materials like stucco, slate, and residentially scaled windows are recommended under this approach. Another direction would be to take a more contemporary "adaptive-re-use" approach to the building enhancing it in a contemporary language, using some of the traditional materials, but in a style of this period of time. Under each of these approaches, careful attention to scale, detail, materials, and the themes of the Historic District would need to be addressed in designs for facade improvements.

The Silverman Building is a one-story building which does not possess the underlying architectural features of the Abbitt and Marshall Building. Emphasis should be placed on making this a more prominent corner building on the intersection. A second story could be added to this building which would allow a gabled roof form to be created as shown in Figure 3.11.







# SIGNAGE IN THE COMMERCIAL AREA

## 4.1 Goals for Signage

There are three categories of signage in the commercial area of Hilton Village: 1) Community signs, like the signs which mark the entrance to the Historic District; 2) Retail and commercial signs which identify businesses; and 3) Informational and regulatory signs which identify streets and provide directions for vehicular traffic. Improvements are needed to each of these forms of signage.

Higher-quality community signs are needed at the gateways to the Historic District. These signs should evoke the "English Village" character of the district in their design, materials, and graphics. They should be located in prominent places at the entrances to the district on Warwick Boulevard and Main Street. In addition to better signage at the gateways, banners which identify the Village are recommended for the pedestrian lights to create a more festive appearance in the commercial area.

Improvements are also needed to retail and commercial signage. Additional standards are needed for building mounted signs, freestanding signs, and other signs which are tailored to work specifically for vehicular and pedestrian viewers. Effective standards for these signs can augment the current guidelines for the Hilton Village Architectural Review Board.





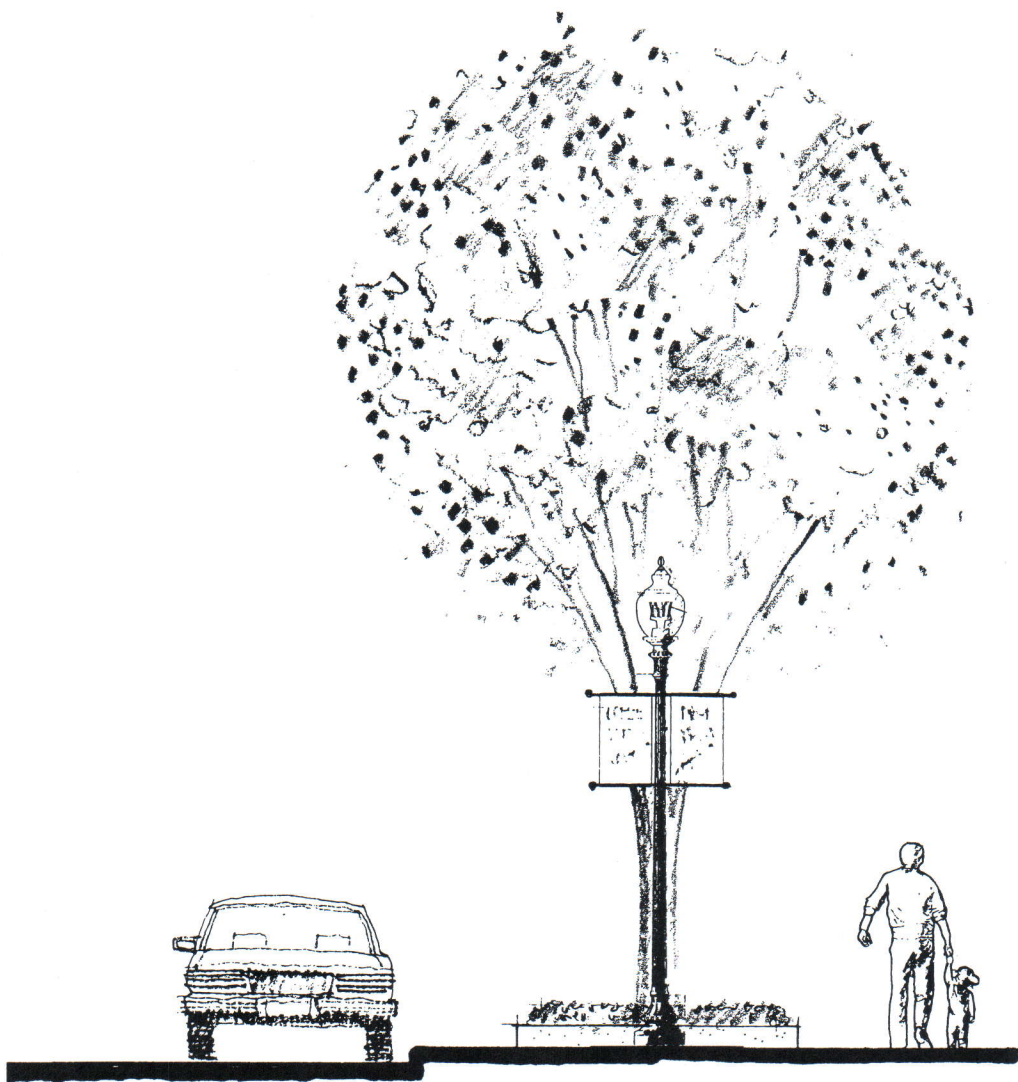


Figure 4.1  
Recommended Gateway  
Signage and Banners;  
Illustration by Eileen  
Tennor and PMA



## **4.2 Community Sign Concepts**

**Gateway Signs to the Village** - Signs which identify the Historic District are recommended at each of the major entrances. Along Warwick Boulevard these would be located in the traffic islands for high visibility within the public right-of-way. These signs should announce the Historic District in a theme and design which represent the "English Village" character of the original design, similar to that shown in Figure 4.1. This sign can also be located adjacent to the sidewalk on the north side of Main Street across from the Library building for the eastern entrance to the Village.

**Banners** - The pedestrian light fixtures offer an opportunity to display banners on a seasonal and special events basis. Permanent brackets which permit changing banner displays are recommended. These are also shown in Figure 4.1.

## **4.3 Retail and Commercial Sign Concepts**

These concepts are intended to provide a range of signage types which can be used in combination with each other to identify businesses for pedestrians and vehicular travelers which are appropriate for the Historic District and address the unique problems with these buildings. It is envisioned that each business could use two of the three signage forms.

**Building Signs** - Building signs are mounted parallel to the building face and are of sufficient size to be visible to vehicular traffic. Building signs can be divided into two categories. Band signs are attached to or hang under the porch lintel beam and have a horizontal proportion and a width of five to six feet. These signs are located above display windows, but do not hang down far enough to obstruct the retail display. Wall signs are signs which are mounted directly to the stucco face of the building in an appropriate relationship to other building features.

**Post-mounted Identity Signs** - Post-mounted signs (also known as freestanding signs in the City's Sign Ordinance) are intended for business identification for vehicular traffic and pedestrian use. The current "mast-arm" sign design, while appropriately traditional for the Historic District, produces a cluttered and busy appearance when several signs are located next to one another. In addition, if the signs are to be mounted above head height for pedestrians, then the posts become awkwardly tall. A simpler sign post design, shown in Figure 4.2, is recommended for all post-mounted signs in the commercial area which will elevate the sign to a height which is clear of pedestrians and clearly visible from vehicles. In addition, the simpler sign post will emphasize the sign graphics rather than the hanging apparatus.

**Projecting Identity Signs** - Projecting "bracket-mounted" signs are intended to be small, pedestrian-oriented identification signs which mark the entrance to a business. These signs are perpendicular to the building facade and mounted at a



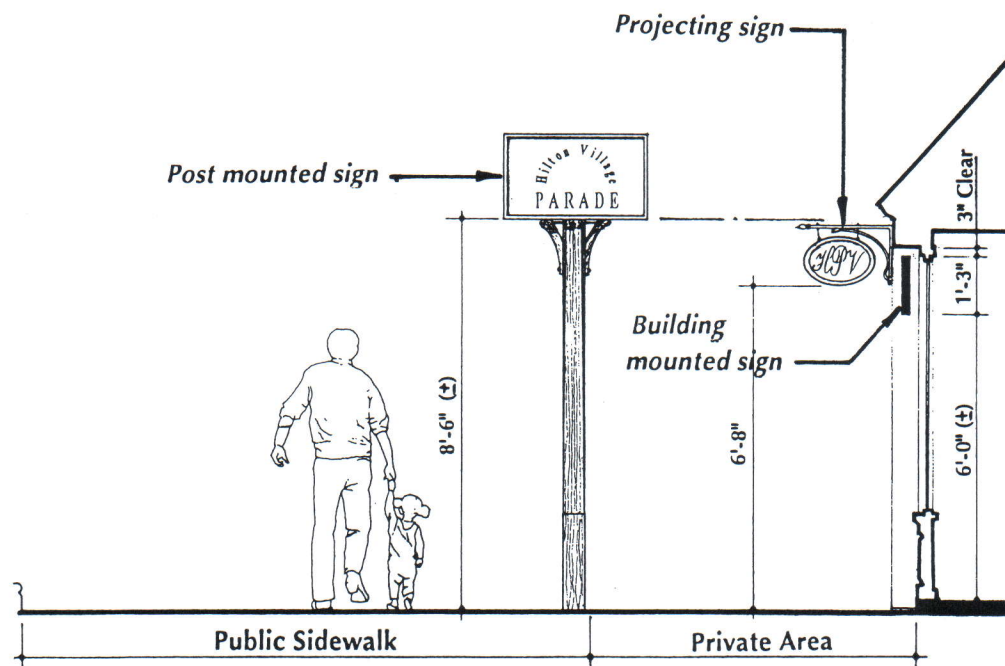
uniform height for easy viewing by pedestrians, as shown in Figure 4.2. Their size would be limited to one-and-one-half square feet so that they would not compete with building-mounted signs or post-mounted signs. Projecting signs should match the color and graphics of the primary sign, but graphics for projecting signs should be limited to logos, business names, and address numbers. A simple metal bracket design is recommended for these signs. Shapes for these signs can include ellipses, circles, diamonds, squares, or other fundamental geometrical shapes.

**Window Signs** - Window signs are signs which are fixed to the glass or mounted to the window frame, or as defined in the City's Sign Ordinance. No changes to the current guidelines are recommended for this form of signage, except for small, well-designed neon signs.

**Organizing Zones for Visibility** - To prevent the obstruction of band signs by the post-mounted signs, two zones are established to separate the different signs as shown in Figure 4.2.

**Band Signs** - Below the bottom of the typical porch beam is the zone reserved for band signs which, mounted parallel to the roadway and building facade, provide visibility to vehicular traffic.

**Post-Mounted Signs and Bracket Signs** - Above the bottom of the typical porch beam is the zone reserved for projecting signs and post-mounted signs which are mounted perpendicular to the roadway.



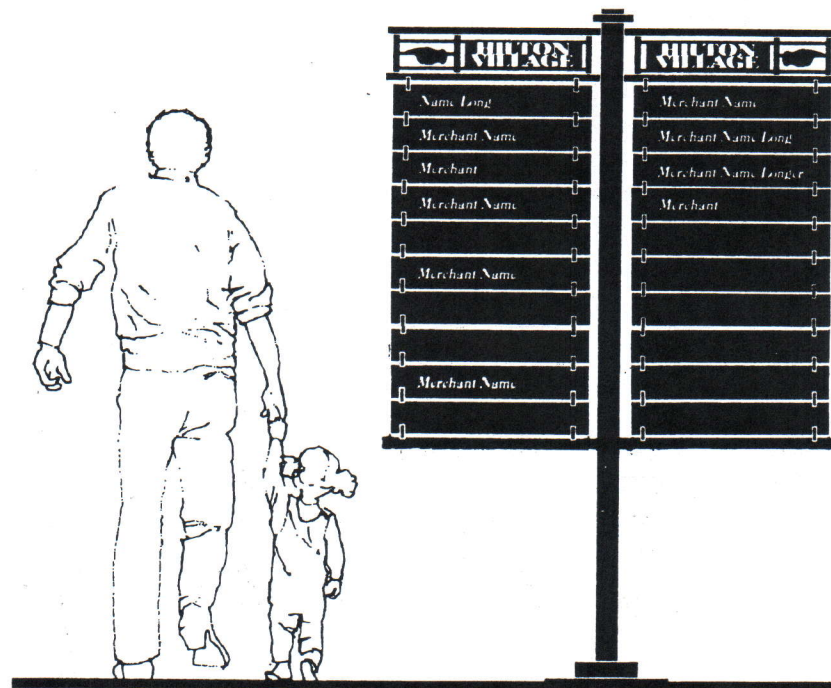
**Figure 4.2**  
Three primary forms of  
Signage for the Commercial  
area, Design and  
illustration by Eileen Tenno  
and PMA



**Merchants/Services Pedestrian Directories** -In the retail/commercial areas of the Historic District pedestrian-scaled directories are proposed which feature changeable tenant identity panels, as shown in Figure 4.3. These directories, located centrally in each block, list the merchants, services and amenities in that block.

#### **4.4 Information and Regulatory Signs**

Signs that control traffic, provide information, and restrict usage by drivers and pedestrians are all necessary but can proliferate and cause visual clutter unless they are organized, installed with care, and properly maintained. Information signs designed to be part of the community sign "family" are distinctive without being obtrusive as shown in Figure 4.4.



**Figure 4.3**  
Proposed merchant  
directory; Design by Eileen  
Tennor

**Information Signs** -To enhance the distinctive historic character of Hilton Village, a variation of the square-post-with-panel system proposed for the Merchants' Directory and the post-mounted identity signs is proposed for information and street name signs. Coordination with VDOT will assure that the customized signs meet state and local standards for size and visibility.

**Regulatory Signs** - Regulatory signs are mounted on Village standard 3" by 3" square posts. These posts are painted dark green like all other fixtures in the Village.

**Typical Location Plan for Signs** - The plan below indicates the typical installation locations of the various kinds of signs including community, tenant identity and regulatory signs. Implementation should follow this general guide as closely as possible while accommodating special circumstances, as needed, on a case-by-case basis.



**Figure 4.4**  
Concept for Regulatory  
Signage; Design by Eileen  
Tennor



# IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

## 5.0

### 5.1 Introduction

Implementation of the concepts and plans in this Master Plan will involve a cooperative effort between property owners, business owners, residents, the Hilton Village Merchants Association, Historic Hilton Village, Inc., CHAR and the City. Streetscape improvements are currently in the planning and construction phases and will be completed soon. However, the complete revitalization of the commercial area must involve a much broader effort than just the installation of a new streetscape. Private property owners will need to take a more active role in funding and managing revitalization efforts on their own properties if real improvements are to be made in the appearance and commercial viability of this area. The City will continue to be an important player in leading difficult projects and providing incentives to "seed" improvements.

There are already several groups in the Village that deal with different aspects of managing its everyday affairs and historic integrity. Even at the present time, some of the areas of interest of these groups overlap. This section deals with strategies for organizing to advocate and manage revitalization. It includes sections on management organizations, priorities for implementing the public-sector improvements, methods of assuring quality and cohesiveness, and strategies for implementing the facade and other building improvements.

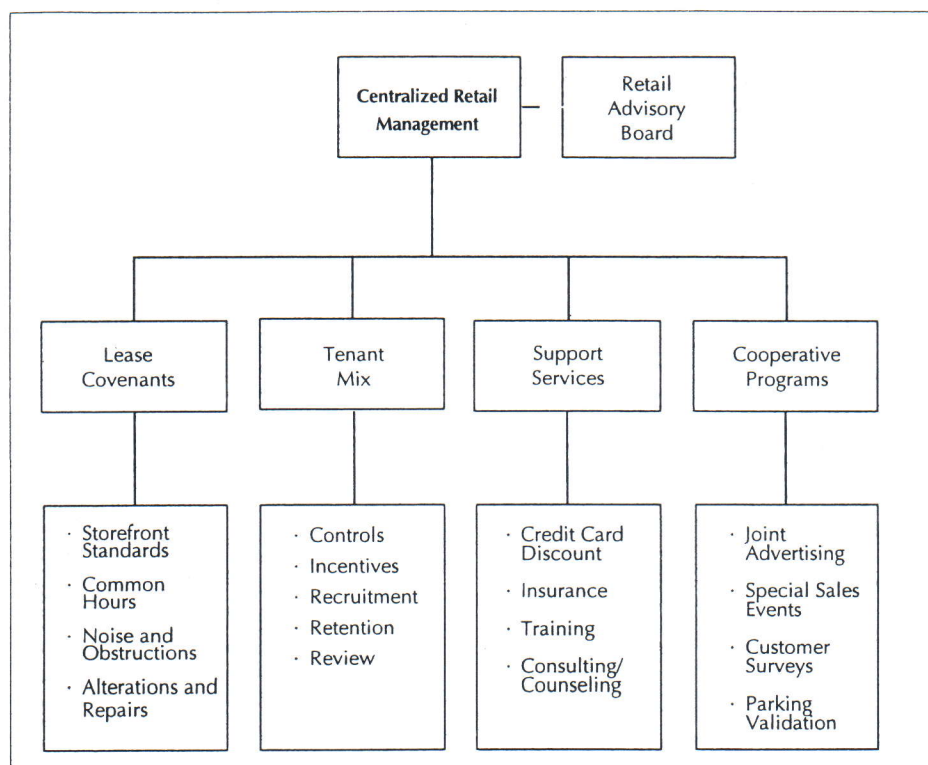
### 5.2 Management of the Revitalization Process

**Centralized Retail Management** - The clearest need is for the organized and active management of the commercial area to pursue and encourage revitalization and promote the area. The most common model for this type of effort would be a centralized retail management (CRM) organization. A chart illustrating the organization and function of such a group is shown in Figure 5.1. The most obvious candidate to take over this role would be the Merchants' Association. This step was also recommended by Land Economics in its report *Retail Market Analysis: Hilton Village Business District*.

Centralized Retail Management (CRM) would be concerned with providing the essential services for the commercial area. The need for an organization to promote, organize, and oversee the commercial area is clearly demonstrated in the Land Economics report. Such activities will be especially critical to existing businesses as the streetscape improvements are implemented, in order to inform shoppers that exciting improvements are underway and that the existing merchants are still open for business. This effort could include publicity of off-street parking options, discounts for shoppers during construction, and other special promotions.

**Managing Revitalization in the Commercial Area** - In addition to the need for CRM, there is also a need to organize the revitalization of the entire commercial area. It will be important for community leaders, organizations, and individuals to become involved in renovating building facades, maintaining landscaping materials, completing open-space improvements, maintaining neighborhood security, working toward improvements in the gateway areas, and working for parking improvements, in order to make the most out of the potential for Hilton's commercial area.

The structures of typical management organizations are illustrated in Figure 5.2. Typically such organizations are incorporated as public-private organizations; that is, incorporated to function privately in matters such as property acquisition (allowing them more flexibility than government, for instance), but with a public purpose, such as district revitalization. Often, centralized retail management could be administered as a function of the management organization, or by common staff, and membership organizations such as the existing Merchants' Association could also be administered through a management organization. Even if the organizations are separate, it is desirable for both of them to share staff and office space for purposes of coordination and cost-efficiency.



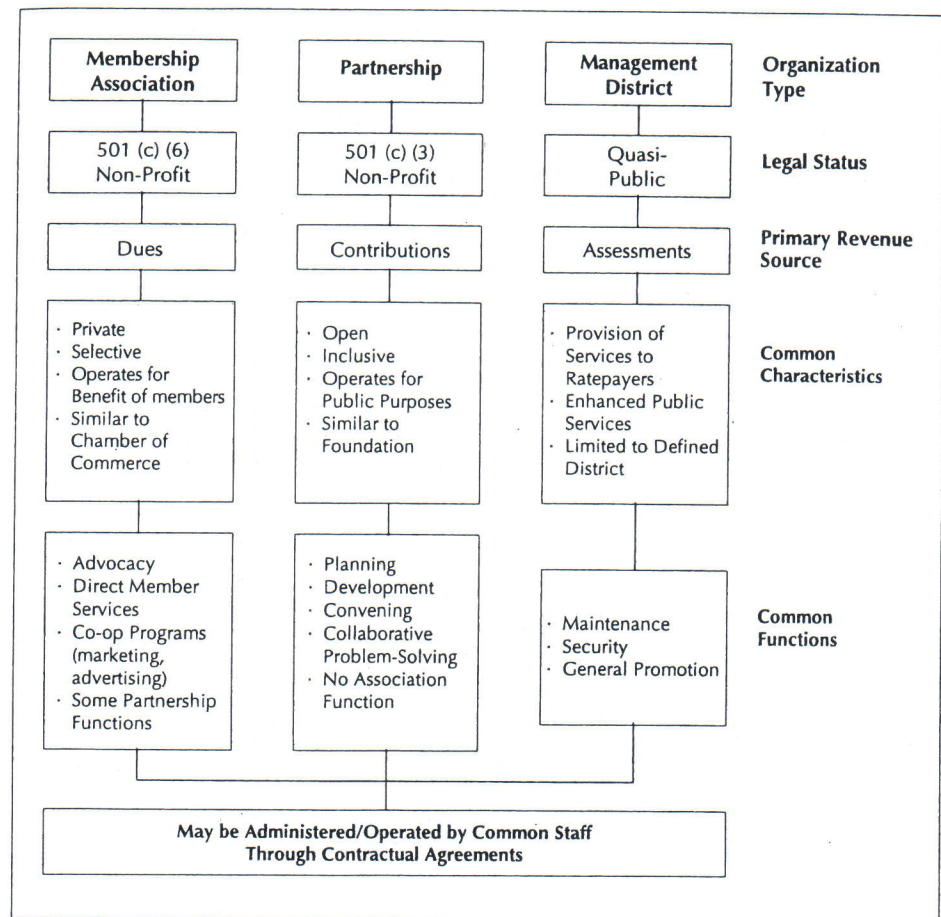
**Figure 5.1**  
Organizational Diagram for  
Centralized Retail  
Management; APA



It must be kept in mind that the needs of commercial property owners and merchants will not always be the same as those of the residents, and although residents and this organization should cooperate and interact, it may be wise to focus the organization on the commercial area and have representation from the residents' groups. Also, the boundaries of the commercial area may expand beyond the Historic District over time, giving any public-private development organization a different set of priorities.

Funding for a public-private development corporation could come from a variety of sources. Seed money could be obtained by or from the City. Funds for ongoing services and staffing could come from the formation of an assessment district. Revenues from assessment districts could be used for improvements (sidewalks, lighting, parking, etc.), for administrative services (customer parking, public relations, group advertising, maintenance and security), and for staffing. The level of assessment could be based on the actual benefit.

Assessment district money would normally be collected through the City and should be allocated to the management organization through a contract making them responsible for services. Because the property owners pay these assessments directly, they should have a major influence over the programs and services they fund.



**Figure 5.2**  
Structural Relationships of  
Management Organizations;  
APA

Additional funds which could be used to supplement these monies could include dues, grants, bond issues sponsored by the City, or perhaps by the formation of a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District which could correspond to the management assessment district.

**Funding for Improvements** - Funding for improvements to the commercial area will involve public and private participation very much as it has in the past. In order to encourage further investment, however, more must be done. The most important needs are for the formation of a management entity and the beginning of a facade improvement program. Funding for these activities will need to involve private sources as well as funding or incentives which may be available from the following sources.

**Block Grants:** Although much of this source of Federal funding has dwindled in recent years, it appears that this mechanism may become more readily available again in the near future. Funds are supplied to the City for use on qualifying projects. Projects which seem most likely to receive funding from this type of mechanism might include acquisition and rehabilitation of deteriorated properties within the Historic District.

**City Bonds:** They can be issued for specific projects and to fund activities in an Assessment or TIF District. The park behind Municipal Lane could be funded by a bond issue

**Capital Improvement Programs:** The City has made a significant investment in Hilton Village and will continue to do so over the next few years as the streetscape is implemented. As these projects come on line, it is hoped that the City will continue to devote funds and staff time to implement the longer-term goals of the master plan.

**Mortgage or Loan Pools:** Funds could be made available for private acquisition of properties or for improvements and building renovation and restoration from a revolving loan fund. This could be organized by the management organization, the City, local banks, or a partnership between some of these entities. A number of such mortgage and loan pools has been formed in other communities, often in cooperation with the City government or management organization. The loan pool could be managed by the management entity, or independently by local banks, in order to provide construction and permanent loans for smaller commercial projects, as well as for facade improvements and renovation of existing properties.

**Assessment District:** a system in which property owners in a defined geographic area are taxed at a specific rate, above and beyond existing property tax rates, to raise funds for district services and improvements. The initiative for establishing an Assessment District must be taken by the private sector, and the City Council would have to approve the Assessment District



plan. A management organization funded through an assessment district could provide funding for a wide range of improvements including landscaping, lighting and signage, street and sidewalk improvements, drainage improvements, pedestrian linkages, parks, fountains, public art displays, and off-street parking facilities. Funds can also be used to support services, including promotion, advocacy, health and sanitation, business recruitment, and recreation and cultural activities. Assessment districts can also fund the management organization and staff which manages the improvements and programs.

***Tax Increment Financing:*** a procedure whereby a municipality may issue bonds to provide infrastructure for private development projects. The incremental increase in tax revenues from the higher property base resulting from private development is pledged to the payment of municipal bonds.

***Property Tax Incentives:*** can be used to a limited extent, but caution must be used to ensure that assessment district funds or tax increment financing funds (if these are used) and tax abatements do not cancel each other out.

***Rehabilitation Tax Credits:*** Rehabilitation tax credits are still available for income-producing properties in the Historic District. Renovation work must comply with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and be certified in order to qualify for the credit.

***Main Street Program:*** The National Trust for Historic Preservation and the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development sponsor "Main Street" programs which offer assistance to historic commercial areas. The program, administered by the National Trust, offers technical assistance and consulting for communities working toward revitalization on a fee basis. The State selects certain communities to be admitted to their program on a competitive basis. The State program includes technical and design assistance to encourage preservation and revitalization.

***Enterprise Zones :*** The Commonwealth of Virginia and the City have designated an Enterprise Zone which includes the Historic Hilton Village commercial area and areas which are adjacent to it. Within the zone, special incentives are offered to qualifying businesses which make facade improvements, increase employment, and employ residents from the area.

### 5.3 Priority Projects for Public Improvements

The following is a list of recommended priorities for projects and public improvements in the Hilton Village Commercial Area along with suggestions for the group which can be most effective in implementing the project.

1. **Completion of the Streetscape (1995-1997)** - This project is one of the most important projects to start the revitalization of the commercial area of Hilton Village. *Priority: High.*
2. **Formation of a Management Organization (1995-1996)** - All the existing organizations in the Village need to begin a dialogue, the goal of which should be the formation of an organization with a primary mission to manage the commercial district of the Village. This may be an existing organization which evolves, or a new organization. Once this is underway, the group should begin formulating funding strategies and setting its own priorities for projects to be undertaken. *Priority: High.*
3. **Adopt Signage and Facade Improvement Guidelines** - The City should endorse the Master Plan and Facade Improvement Concepts and the Hilton Village Architectural Review Board should adopt the plan guidelines for use in the commercial area so that facade improvements work toward a collective vision. *Priority: High.*
4. **Adjust Ordinances** - Although most aspects of the plan can be implemented right away, some changes to the City's ordinances will be needed to allow certain aspects of the plan to be implemented. The Hilton Village Historic Overlay District will need to be modified to allow porch or facade reconstruction to occur forward of the existing line of construction. It is recommended that the language of the ordinance be adjusted to permit the Architectural Review Board to approve the reconstruction of front porches one-and-one-half feet forward of the front line of the original porch line where the applicant meets the intent, design, and materials specified in the facade improvement guidelines. In addition, where front additions are called for in the facade plan, the Board should be given the mechanism to approve these or similar facade improvements. Additionally, the Sign Ordinance will need to be revised to allow post-mounted freestanding signs in the commercial area for buildings with less than 50 feet of frontage if these signs are desired. *Priority: High.*
5. **Facade Improvement Assistance Funding** - The City has reserved funds from the Community Development Block Grant program for use in encouraging private property facade improvements. Design of the funding program should be finalized immediately so that funds can be made available as soon as possible. Because cooperation between owners will be essential in re-unifying the row-building facades, funding for projects involving



adjoining properties should be given priority or higher levels of assistance to encourage cooperation and more complete cooperation. *Priority: High.*

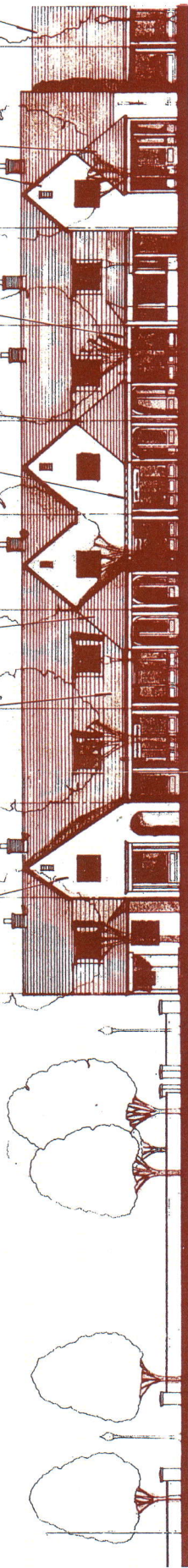
6. **Improvements to the Alleys (1996-1997)** - Although work on this problem should probably be the responsibility of the management organization, the City, merchants, property owners and CHAR should begin discussions about possible interim actions which can be taken until the management organization is up and running. Adoption of standards for private front and back yards, and encouragement to implement those changes, would be an important first step. The City can also be involved in discussion with property owners about establishing head-in parking along the alleys in the rear yards of commercial properties; creating pedestrian pathways between the alleys and the street; and organizing lighting and circulation in the alleys more efficiently. *Priority: Moderate-High.*
7. **Parking Management (1995-1996)** - Evaluation and management of existing parking resources is a fairly straightforward but potentially highly valuable activity to the local merchants. Parking lots which are currently under-utilized should be examined for ways in which parking can be shared and better marked so that shoppers can find parking and are aware that they can use it. *Priority: Moderate.*
8. **Acquisition of Property for Redevelopment/Parking** - Once the management organization is functioning, its members can begin to evaluate the need for additional parking as the Village commercial area grows and prospers, and can acquire key properties which might become either parking or redevelopment opportunities. *Priority: Low.*
9. **Village Promotional Activities** - The merchants association should begin promotional activities meant to convey to people that the Village is in the process of being transformed and that in the meantime there are many wonderful shops open for business and plenty of places to park. This will be especially important during streetscape construction. These responsibilities will transition to the CRM portion of the management organization once it is set up. *Priority: High.*
10. **Construction of Park near Municipal Lane** - At the present time there is no designated funding source or timetable for the construction of this facility. CHAR and other community groups should act to ensure that the project moves forward. *Priority: Low to Moderate.*
11. **Resolution of Maintenance Issues** - At the present time there is a question about responsibility to maintaining the improvements contained in the streetscape plans. These issues should be resolved for the short-term, pending formation of the management organization. When that organization is functioning, there will still need to be an agreement with the City about what will be maintained by the City and what will be maintained privately.

The maintenance of the landscape and general cleanliness of the district are essential to the success of the commercial district. *Priority: High.*



# Recommended Design Standards for the Hilton Village Commercial Area

6.0



## About the Standards

These guidelines are recommended to property owners and tenants in the Hilton Village commercial area to encourage and assist them in designing improvements to their buildings, streetscapes and yards in a manner which will be compatible with the Historic District and which will allow the area to function better as a commercial center.

The standards consist of strategies for facade improvements, display windows, building additions, signage and landscape improvements which will establish a unified and cohesive image for the commercial area as recommended in The Hilton Village Commercial Area Master Plan.

These standards are intended to supplement the Guidelines for Historic Hilton Village currently in use by the Hilton Village Architectural Review Board by providing additional direction relating to the special issues of the commercial area. These strategies and recommendations are additional requirements which should be met when altering a property in the commercial area.

## Objectives

**The Need for Facade Improvements -**  
Many building facades along Warwick Boulevard and Main Street are in need of improvements to storefront displays or have inappropriate front facades and/or rear facades which obscure the special architectural character of the district.

**The Need for Improvements to the Rear Yards and Alleys -**  
Alleys and rear yard areas offer the potential to improve the efficiency of parking and the overall appearance of the commercial area. Improvements to these areas are essential in order to make the area more appealing and functional.

**The Need for Improvements to Signage -**  
Improvements are needed to commercial signage to make it more readable, less cluttered and safer. Improvements which are recommended establish a model signage system which is integrated with the building facades and streetscape design.

## Guide to the Figures

- Concept of Improved Building Facades ..... Fig. 1 & Fig. 2
- Improvements to the Original Row-Buildings
  - Projecting porches ..... Fig. A thru C
  - Gabled end units ..... Fig. D thru F
  - Areas between porches ..... Fig. B, J & K
  - Storefront Glazing ..... Fig. G
- Improvements to Private Areas
  - Retail Front Yards ..... Fig. L
  - Mixed-Use Front Yards ..... Fig. M
  - Rear Yard Areas ..... Fig. N
- Concepts for Rear Additions
  - Rear Yard Additions ..... Fig. O
- Concepts for Improving Non-Contributing Building Facades
  - Traditional Cornice Detail ..... Fig. P
- Recommended Street Furniture & Paving
  - Recommended Streetscape Furnishings ..... Fig. Q
- Recommended Signage Standards
  - Signage Types ..... Fig. R
  - Signage Locations ..... Fig. S

## Original Row-Buildings:

**Re-establishing the Rhythm of Porches and Roofs -** Where the original rhythm of porches has been obscured by front additions or alterations, it is important to re-establish this rhythm by restoring the projection of the porch from the adjacent storefront. The following strategies are recommended to restore these rhythms and to better integrate display areas at the street level, as illustrated in Figures 1 and 2 at the top of this sheet. It will be important that adjacent owners work with one another toward a common vision in order to restore a harmonious appearance to the commercial area.

**Recess the Storefront Areas Between Porches** - To distinguish the porch from the main facade and the adjacent storefront display windows. To accomplish this it is important to maintain a setback between the front of the porch and the adjacent storefront area, as shown in Figure B. It is also recommended that the store fronts

be setback not less than three (3) feet from the porch front. Infill storefront construction should be traditionally detailed and recessed behind columns similar to those typically used for porches. Figure J illustrates how to detail low sloped roofs for infill areas in front of the stucco portions of a facade. Figure K illustrates how to detail roofs for infill which transition to slate roofs.

**Reconstruct porches to restore porch projections** where storefronts have been built out to the face of the original porch. As shown in Figure C, this will re-emphasize the porch element without completely tearing out the existing storefront construction to obtain

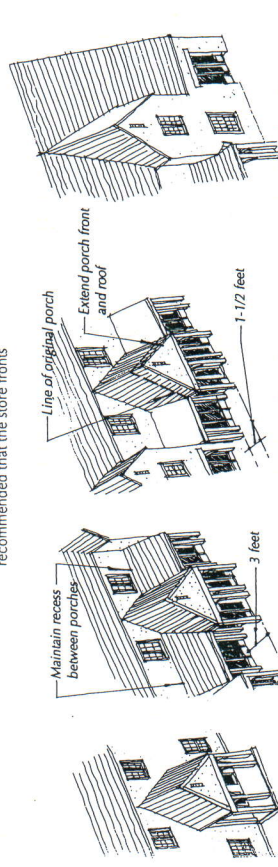


Figure A  
Restore Porches in Residential Use

Figure B  
Recess Infill Areas Between Porches

Figure C  
Reconstruct Porches Forward of Infill in Certain Cases

Figure D  
Enclosure of Recessed Porch



Figure 1: Illustration of potential improvements to the commercial area

Reconstruct facade to create original openings for entry and display.

Reconstruct facade to emphasize two-story stucco gable.

Reconstruct storefront with low-sloped roof.

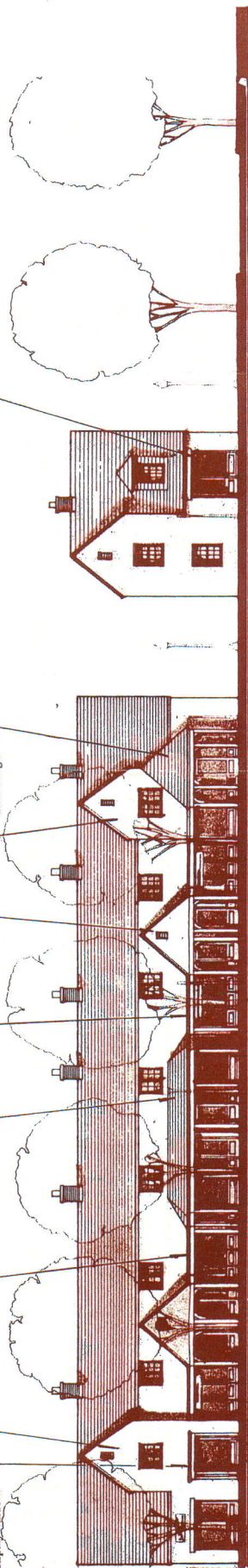
Reconstruct large double bay porch with traditional storefront.

Reconstruct storefront with low-sloped roof.

Reconstruct facade to create original openings for entry and display.

Optional projecting bay display window.

Optional porch and infill design.



a recessed arrangement. As authorized by the Hilton Village Architectural Review Board, front porches may be extended one and one half feet (1-1/2) from the original porch front in order to restore its appearance in the facade under the following conditions: (1) In reconstructing the porch front, all of the original details are to be replicated. It is also important to match the original materials. (2) In addition, the existing storefront to the side of the porch must be rebuilt to match the details recommended for infill areas. (3) The owners of each half of a porch must agree to reconstruct the entire porch with matching details, materials and colors on each side.

**Gabled End Units** - The end units of each row-building require a different series of strategies to restore their appearance. Where these end units are being converted to office or retail uses which do not require large display areas the original front porch can be enclosed with a traditionally detailed glass storefront system as illustrated in Figure D. Where additional retail display windows are needed, a projecting "rectangular" bay can be built centered under the main gable roof, as shown in Figure E. This projecting display area must be detailed with a flat roof, a cornice frieze, and with 4" columns (similar to other one-story flat roofed porches in the Village.)

At some locations where it is more appropriate, the Board may allow hip-roof porches used for these row-buildings. In this case, the porch should be located as shown in Figure F, so that the peak of the porch roof aligns with the corner of the eaves of the side upper roof.

**Storefront Glazing** - A traditionally detailed wood storefront system is recommended for all new storefronts in the commercial area. These should be designed with moderately sized panes of plate glass as shown in these Figure G. This will allow merchandise to be seen more easily and will better distinguish the storefront areas from the original buildings.

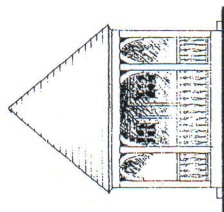


Figure H  
Original Hip-Roof  
Projecting Porch

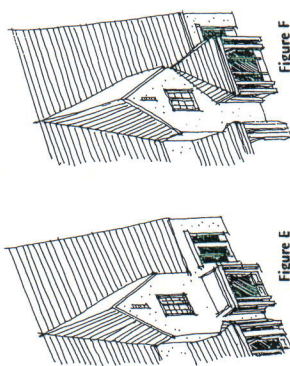


Figure E  
Rectangular Bay  
Display Window

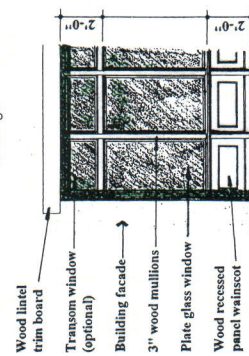


Figure F  
Hip-Roof Porch  
Display Window

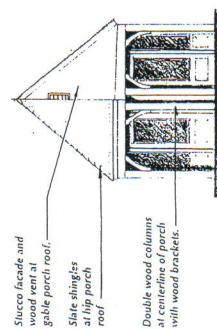


Figure I  
Enclosed Porch with  
Two Entrances

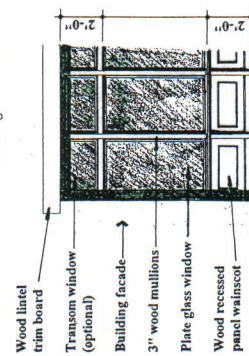


Figure G  
Traditional Storefront Glazing

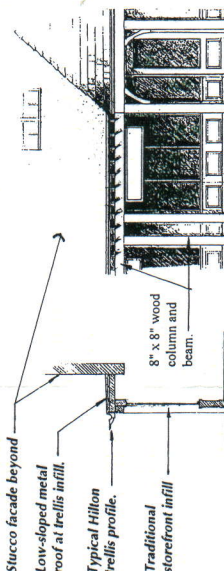


Figure J  
SECTION

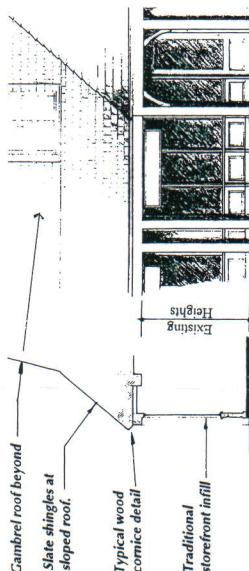


Figure K  
SECTION



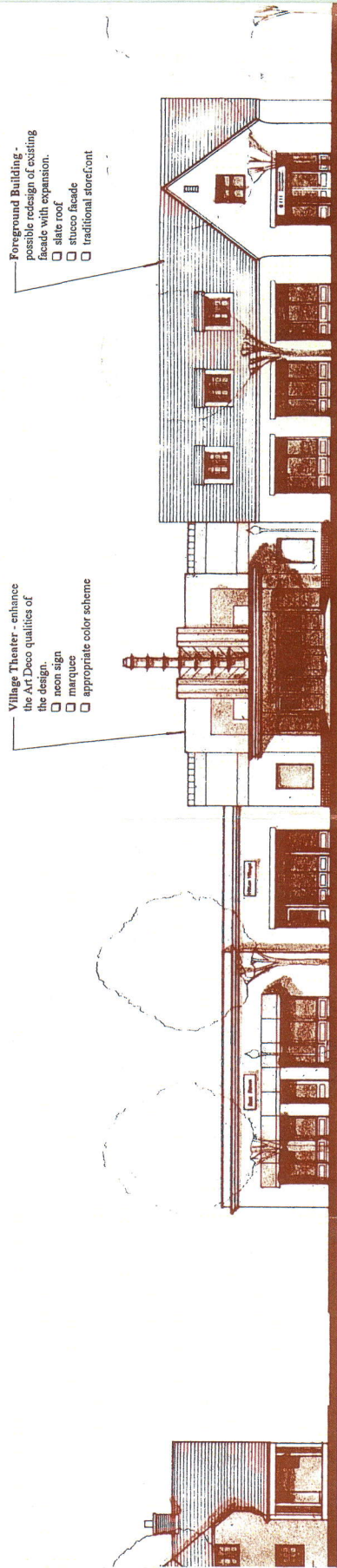


Figure N  
Improving Rear Yards

**Private Areas** - The public sidewalk area in front of each property is for pedestrian use and should be kept clear of signage, planters, fencing or other obstructions (See Figure L and Figure M)

**Private Areas in the Front** - In areas where paving extends up to the front of

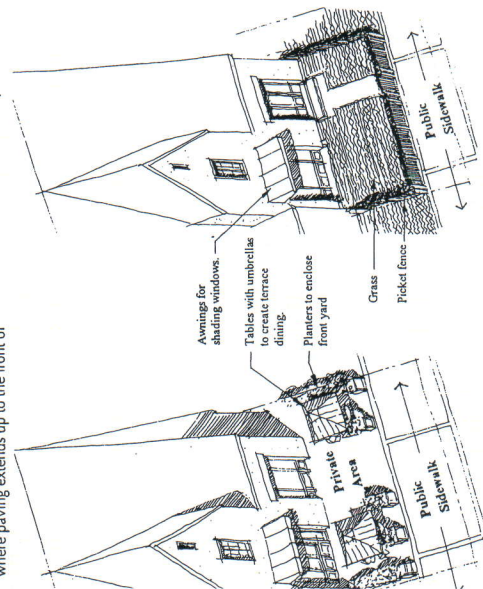


Figure M  
Personalizing Front Yards  
in Mixed-use Areas

in front of row-buildings. Areas where grass lawns exist should be remain as greenspace, either in the form of lawn areas or as landscaped urban gardens, as shown in Figure M. Wood picket fences as allowed in other parts of the Village are permitted around these green spaces. Fence heights should not exceed a height of 30 inches to maintain a sense of openness along the row-buildings.

**Canopies and Awnings** - Awnings and canopies for original row buildings need to be small and of limited projection (two to four feet) if they are to avoid overwhelming the facades. Fabric awnings and canopies are appropriate on these buildings where they can be attached to the primary facade of the building, rather than the edge of the roof, as shown in Figure L and Figure M. Canopies and awnings should not be used to extend the roof area of the primary roof of the building, because this will hide the underlying facade and make the display windows dark and hard to see. Larger and more expansive canopies could be used at larger two-story buildings where the scale of the building can accommodate a larger forward projection.

**Rear Yard Areas** - Building owners and businesses should work to improve the rear yards of their property so that they are neat and attractive, and improve the appearance and efficiency of available parking. Improvements to landscaping, lighting, walkways, parking and paving should be added where possible, like those shown in Figure N. The alleys need improved lighting, especially if visitors will be encouraged to park there. Because there are utility poles along the alleys, area lighting could be attached to the existing poles and supplemented with decorative fixtures mounted on poles or on buildings.

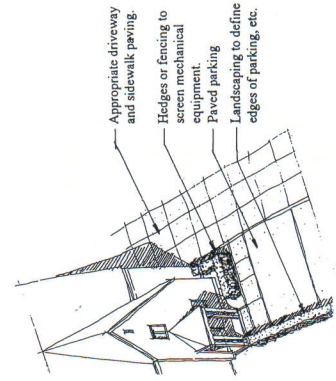


Figure O  
Concept for Rear Yard Additions

**Rear Additions** - Rear yard additions for the original row-buildings should allow expansion of the first and second floors, while maintaining areas for parking, landscaping and trash collection. In most locations these buildings can be expanded 15 to 20 feet and still leave enough site area for parking and other site needs. Limits recommended for rear additions are shown in Figure 2.10 of the Hilton Village Commercial Area Master Plan. It is recommended that construction of storage buildings be prohibited in the rear lots of the commercial area so that site area can be better utilized for parking or more substantial building additions.

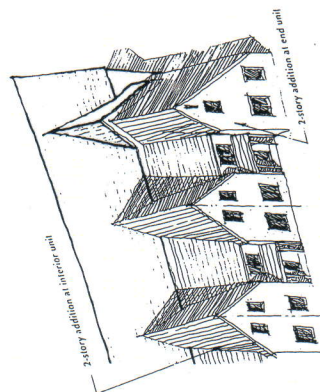


Figure P  
Illustrates some basic strategies  
for designing rear yard additions.



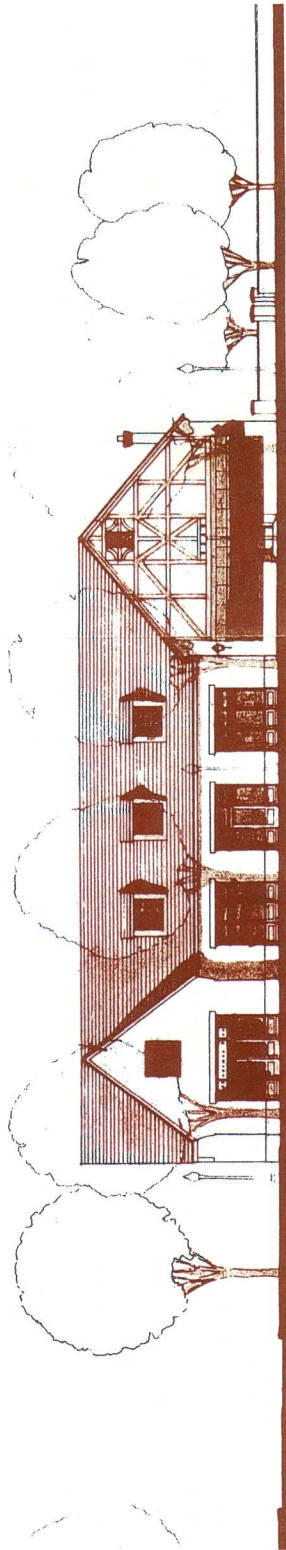


Figure 2: Proposed Facade Improvements to Non-Contributing Buildings at the Intersection of Main and Warwick.

## Non-Contributing Buildings

**Foreground Buildings** - The Abbot and Marshall Building and the Silverman Fur Building are prominent buildings in the commercial district because of their location at the corners of the Main Street intersection. Each building plays a significant role in marking and defining the heart of the commercial area. Each one could be enhanced to contribute more to the image and character of the commercial area and overall Historic District as illustrated in Figure 2 above.

**Background Buildings** - The old C&P Telephone Building and Buildings at 10247-10249 Warwick Boulevard are one story buildings which have a simple storefront style of architecture. Figure 2 illustrates how simple awnings, cornices, and storefront designs can be used to give these buildings a traditional mercantile building appearance which would be compatible with the district, yet not attempt to bring them into the two-story style of the residential buildings.

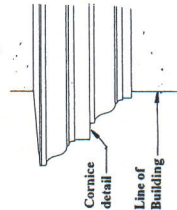


Figure P  
Traditional Cornice Profile

## Streetscape Furnishings

The colors, materials, and street furniture recommended for the streetscape are meant to enhance the overall "English Village" character of the district. A range of light tan colors is recommended for the concrete pavers to maintain the appearance of the aged concrete which was originally used for sidewalks in Hilton. The planter edge and concrete strips are recommended to be a light beige color. Benches recommended are "English Park" type heavy wooden benches constructed of hardwoods and anchored in place. The color recommended for all metal work (lights, trash receptacles and sign posts) is a semi-gloss dark green. These and other elements appropriate streetscape furnishings are shown in Figure Q.

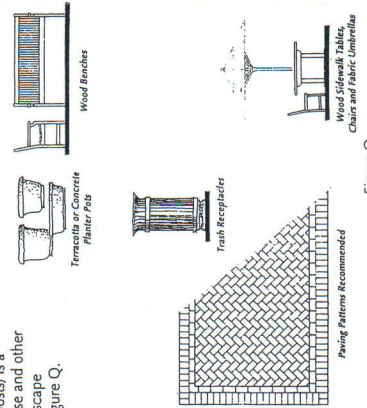


Figure Q  
Streetscape Furnishings

**Building Signs** - Building signs can be divided into two categories. Band signs which are attached or hang under the porch lintel beam and have a height of 15 inches and a width of five to six feet. These signs are located above display windows, but do not hang down far enough to obstruct the retail display, as shown in Figure R. Wall signs are signs which are mounted directly to the stucco

face of the building in an appropriate relationship to other building features.

**Post-Mounted Signs** - A simpler sign post design is recommended to replace the "mast-arm" sign design throughout the commercial area as shown in Figure S. This design is recommended for all post-mounted signs in the commercial area to elevate the sign to a height which is clear of pedestrians, yet is still visible from vehicles. In addition, the simpler sign post will emphasize the sign graphics rather than the hanging apparatus. Sign sizes should not exceed 8.5 square feet in area. The sign board can be rectangular, square, elliptical, diamond shaped, or another shape as approved by the Architectural Review Board.

**Projecting Signs** - These signs are mounted perpendicular to the building facade at a uniform height for easy viewing by pedestrians, as shown in Figure S. Their size would be limited to one-and-one-half square feet. A simple metal bracket design is recommended to attach these signs to the facade or porches.

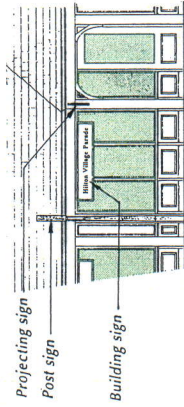


Figure R  
Signage Types

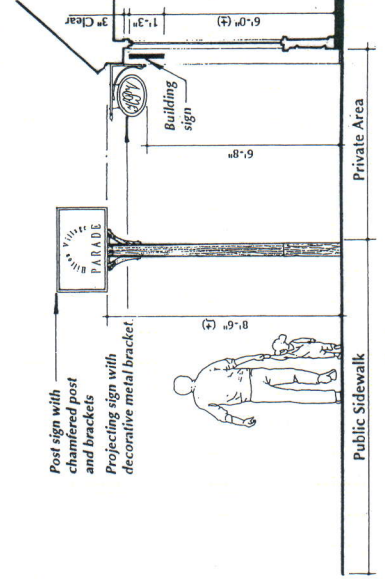


Figure S  
Signage Locations